3
ATONEMENT ARC
Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
STORY BY
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Higurashi
WHEN THEY CRY
ATONEMENT ARC

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A PARA-SITE!?
YOU'RE SAYING THOSE THINGS ARE IN OUR BRAINS...!?
Yes... That is the truth of Oyashiro-sama's Curse.
IF THIS FACT GOT OUT, IT WOULD CRUSH ALL FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA.
THAT'S WHY THE OYASHIRO-SAMA FANATICS ARE TRYING TO STEAL THE SCRAPBOOK.
AND...
...NOW THAT WE KNOW THE TRUTH...
...THEY WANT TO TAKE OUR LIVES TOO...!

KEEP OUT
CHAPTER 8: TURNAROUND

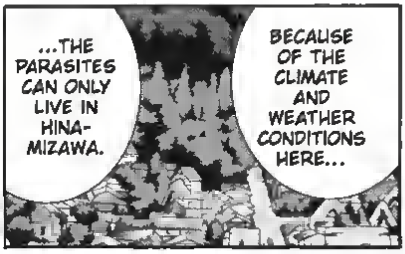
THERE ARE PARASITES IN OUR BRAINS...?
THAT'S COMPLETELY OUTRA-GEOUS...
Hon-estly, no...
...Well...
!
...You don't believe it, do you?
BUT THE PARASITE THEORY EXPLAINS EVERY-THING...
IT FITS PERFECTLY WITH THE LEGEND OF OYASHIRO-SAMA THAT'S BEEN HANDED DOWN IN HINAMIZAWA.

IT WASN'T DEMONS THAT CAME OUT OF THE SWAMP.
IT WAS PARA-SITES
...DEMONS POURED OUT OF ONIGAFUCHI SWAMP AND ATTACKED THE VILLAGERS?
YOU KNOW THE PART WHERE IT SAYS THAT A LONG, LONG TIME AGO ...
THEY WERE SO TERRIFYING IN THEIR RAGE, THEY CAME TO BE CALLED "DEMONS."
BECAUSE OF THE PARASITES, SOME PEOPLE WENT BERSERK AND ATTACKED OTHER VILLAGERS.
...AND CALMED THE DEMONS.
OYASHIRO-SAMA DESCENDED UPON THE VILLAGE ...
...WAS A DOCTOR OR SOMEONE SIMILAR WHO CAME TO THE VILLAGE.
MOST LIKELY THIS "OYASHIRO-SAMA"...
Next.
...I GUESS YOU COULD INTERPRET IT THAT WAY...

...AND PUT A STOP TO THE VIOLENCE AND DERANGEMENT THEY BROUGHT ON.
THAT DOCTOR RELIEVED THE EPIDEMIC CAUSED BY THE PARASITES ...

...the curse that strikes villagers who leave.
And it also explains "Oyashiro-sama's Curse"...
.....

...THE PARASITES TRIED TO STOP THEM.
SO WHEN THEIR HOSTS, THE HUMANS INFECTED WITH THE PARASITES, TRIED TO LEAVE HINAMIZAWA ...


...THE PARASITES CAN ONLY LIVE IN HINA-MIZAWA.
BECAUSE OF THE CLIMATE AND WEATHER CONDITIONS HERE...

...MOTIVAT-ING THEM TO RETURN TO THE VILLAGE...
THEY WOULD STIMULATE THEIR HOSTS TO DERANGEMENT AND VIOLENCE MORE FORCIBLY...

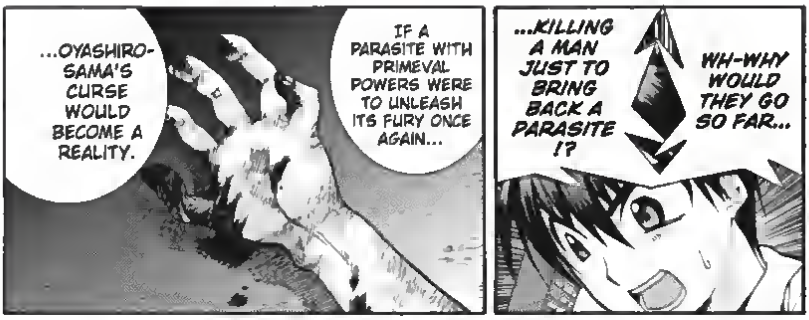
BUT WAIT. IN THAT CASE, YOU AND I...
...AND EVERYONE IN THE VILLAGE WOULD HAVE TO BE A HOST TO THIS PARASITE, RIGHT?
BUT NOTHING HAPPENS TO US WHEN WE LEAVE THE VILLAGE.
THAT MIGHT BE BECAUSE THE PARASITES' ABILITIES HAVE WEAKENED AFTER SO MANY YEARS.
THAT'S WHAT TAKANO-SAN SAID.
...

WHEN SHE FIRST TOLD ME ABOUT THE PARASITES, I HONESTLY COULDN'T BELIEVE IT.
BUT NOW THAT SHE'S EXPLAINED, IT DOES ALIGN WITH THE VILLAGE LEGEND PERFECTLY.

AND WHAT'S MORE, THAT WHITE VAN WAS TAILING RENA.
THE FACT THAT THE FANATICS ARE GOING SO FAR TO PROTECT THIS SECRET...
...IS EVIDENCE THAT WHAT SHE'S SAYING MUST BE TRUE.

SO OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE IS REALLY A LOCAL SICKNESS CAUSED BY PARASITES?
I SEE. THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE FANATICS ARE SO DESPERATE TO KEEP THEIR SECRET...

Wha—!? What do you mean?
TO REVIVE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA...
...THE FANATICS ARE PLANNING SOMETHING EVEN MORE TERRIBLE.
EH?
That's not all, Kei-ichi-kun.
...THAT IS THE TRUE MANIFESTATION OF "OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE."
TOMITAKE-SAN'S DEATH, SCRATCHING AT HIS THROAT UNTIL IT KILLED HIM...
AFTER EXTENSIVE RESEARCH, THEY'VE REVIVED AN EXTREMELY DAMAGING PARASITE.
THEY HAVE THEIR SIGHTS SET ON THE POWER OF THE ANCIENT PARA-SITES.
!!
MOST LIKELY, THEY USED TOMITAKE-SAN AS A GUINEA PIG...
...TO TEST THE PARASITE'S STRENGTH...


...OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE WOULD BECOME A REALITY.
IF A PARASITE WITH PRIMEVAL POWERS WERE TO UNLEASH ITS FURY ONCE AGAIN...
...KILLING A MAN JUST TO BRING BACK A PARASITE !?
WH-WHY WOULD THEY GO SO FAR...

...THE REVIVAL OF OYASHIRO-SAMA THE DEITY.
AND THAT WOULD MEAN...

...TO BRING BACK OYASHIRO-SAMA IN MODERN TIMES.
THE FAITH HAS BEEN ALL BUT LOST, SO NOW THEY'RE ABOUT TO COMMENCE A LARGE-SCALE CEREMONY...

THE FANATICS...

...AND PLUNGE THE VILLAGERS INTO THE CURSE'S HELL!!
...ARE GOING TO SPREAD THE ANCIENT PARASITES THROUGHOUT HINAMIZAWA...

WHA...?
SPREAD THE PARASITES... THROUGH THE WHOLE VILLAGE...!?
GYU (CLENCH)
.....
B-BUT IF THEY KILL EVERYONE...
...THEN THEY CAN'T REVIVE A RELIGION! THEY CAN'T REVIVE ANYTHING!
WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT!?
...I DON'T KNOW EITHER.
DO THEY HAVE SOME PLAN FOR AFTER THEY'VE SPREAD THE PARA-SITES?

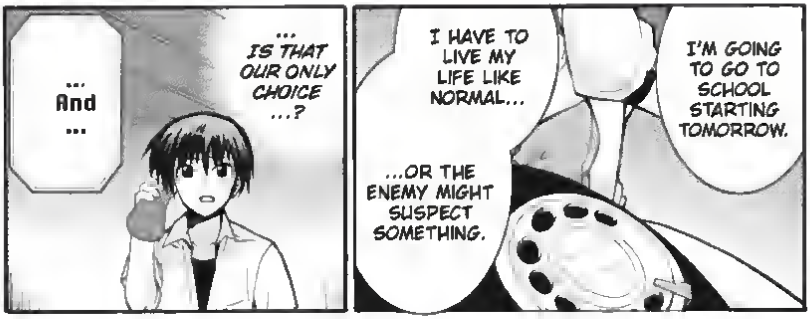
...do they intend to die with the rest of the village, in the name of their faith...?
Or as fanatics...

SO ...!
YOU KNOW A DETEC-TIVE, DON'T YOU? OOISHI?
WE CAN'T HANDLE THESE PEOPLE ON OUR OWN!

Let's go to the police.
... Rena ...

...Let's just think about what we should do next.
BUT THE WAY THINGS ARE...

IF WE REPORT THIS, IT MIGHT BACKFIRE, AND WE'LL GET CAUGHT.
WE CAN'T. THE SONOZAKIS' INFLUENCE IS STRONG, EVEN OVER THE POLICE.
GYU


I'M GOING TO GO TO SCHOOL STARTING TOMORROW.
I HAVE TO LIVE MY LIFE LIKE NORMAL...
...OR THE ENEMY MIGHT SUSPECT SOMETHING.
... IS THAT OUR ONLY CHOICE ...?
... And ...

...whatever you do, do not tell Mii-chan about this.
!

Why not? Mion is our friend!
THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS AT THE CENTER OF THIS PLOT.
So we can't say for sure that Mii-chan will be on our side.
... BUT ...

...aside from each other...
Keiichi-kun...
S-SO I HAVE TO SUSPECT MION...?
Rena...
...WE DON'T KNOW WHO IN HINAMIZAWA MIGHT BE OUR ENEMY ANYMORE.
KANA (CHIRP)
KANA
KANA
カナカナカナ...
カナカナカナ...
KANA
KANA
KANA
THE UNCOM-FORTABLE, SLEEPLESS NIGHTS CONTINUE.
THIS TOO IS THE SAME AS ALWAYS.

SATOKO IS FAST ASLEEP.
I COULDN'T EAT ANOTHER BITE...
MMMNEM-NUH...
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO SPEND A NIGHT LIKE THIS.
CHILDREN MUSTN'T DRINK ALCOHOL, SIR.

RIKA...
...THE ANNOYING ONE IS BACK.
WHY NOT?
THIS LIFE WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER ANYWAY.
SO...
RENA RYUGU STAYED HOME FROM SCHOOL TODAY.
ACCORDING TO THE USUAL PATTERN...
RIKA ...
KEIICHI TRIED, BUT HE JUST COULDN'T OPPOSE HIS DESTINY.

THE BODY ...
...THE NIGHT OF JUNE 25TH IS WHEN I WILL DIE.
...WILL BE BURNED BLACK AND CUT INTO PIECES.
...RIKA...

YES. IT'S WHAT ALWAYS HAPPENS.
BUT...
IT'S ONLY WHAT ALWAYS HAPPENS.
...THERE'S NO NEED TO MAKE THAT FACE.
...THIS WORLD WILL END TOO...
SOON ...

MIIN (BUZZZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN
THE NEXT DAY...
I COULDN'T SLEEP A WINK LAST NIGHT...
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD RELAX AFTER HEARING ALL THAT.
...I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT ANY-ONE WOULD BE PLOT-TING TO DESTROY THE VILLAGE.
WHEN I LOOK AT THIS PEACEFUL SCENE...
JUST LIKE SHE SAID SHE WOULD, RENA IS ACTING EXACTLY LIKE NORMAL.
...THAT MION WOULD BE ONE OF THOSE PEOPLE.
LET ALONE ...

KEI-CHAN?
WHAT'S WRONG?
S-SORRY.
HEY... WHAT'RE YOU SO SURPRISED FOR?
AAHH-HA-HA-HA...
WELL, I GUESS IT'S BECAUSE OF THIS OLD MAN'S STUNNING BEAUTY.
MION !?
WHOA!
GATAN
KOTTER

THIS GIRL— MION— WANTS TO SACRIFICE THE VILLAGE...
...FOR THE CULT DEVOTED TO OYASHIRO-SAMA?
HUH? NO SNAPPY COME-BACK?
HEY, MION.
HUH?
(BUZZZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN
RENA TOLD ME NOT TO, BUT I'M GONNA COME RIGHT OUT AND ASK HER.
?
MION, I HAVE SOMETHING SERIOUS TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.
WHAT'S THE DEAL? WHY ARE YOU CALLING ME OUT BEHIND THE P.E. SHED?
BESIDES, MION IS OUR FRIEND.
I WANT TO TRUST MY FRIENDS.
NOTHING WOULD BE MORE REASSURING THAN HAVING MION ON OUR SIDE.

...THAT MION IS INVOLVED IN THE SONOZAKIS' PLOT...
BUT ON THE OFF CHANCE ...
...MIGHT KILL ME!
...THEN MION...
MION!
IS IT TRUE THAT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS PLOTTING TERRORIST ACTS TO PROMOTE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA!?
BUT I DON'T WANT TO KEEP HIDING THINGS LIKE THIS!!

...PLOTTING BIOTERRORISM ATTACKS THROUGHOUT HINAMIZAWA USING PARASITES!?
TO REVIVE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA, ARE THE SONOZAKIS ...

WHA ...?

HOW WILL YOU ANSWER, MION!!?
IF I STRIKE RIGHT AT THE HEART OF THE MATTER, SHE SHOULDN'T HAVE A LIE AT THE READY.

SHIN (SILENCE)

HEH...
SHE'S LAUGHING ...
HEH HEH.
HEH HEH HEH.
—!

HEH HEH HEH...

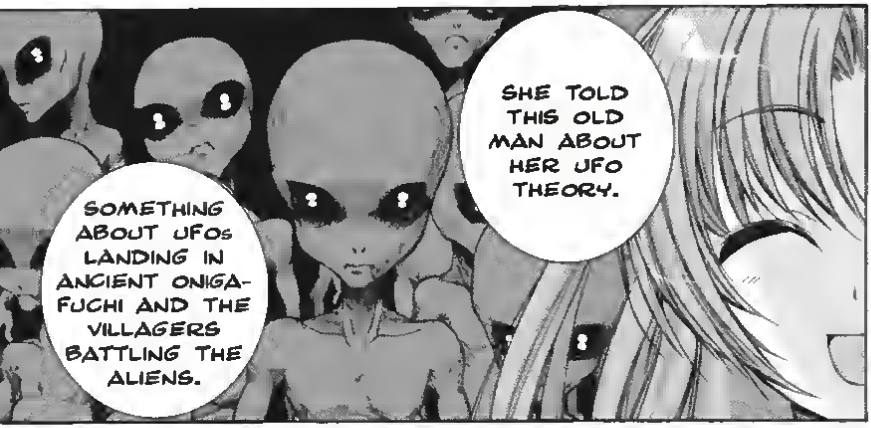
WH-WHAT'S SO FUNNY!!?
BASA
BASA (FLAP)
HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH...
HEH HEH HEH!
DON'T TELL ME YOU REALLY...
DON'T TELL ME...
MION ...!
M...
IS MION GOING TO KILL ME...!?
IS IT LIKE RENA SAID...?

あ
AH-HYA!
GAH-HAAAA-HA-HA-HA!!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, KEI-CHAN!?
ひゃ
HYA HYA!
ひゃひゃ
HYA HYA!
ひゃひゃ
EH?

ER...UM... THERE ARE PEOPLE DOING RESEARCH ON A PARASITE WITH ANCIENT POWERS.
AND TO REVIVE OYASHIRO-SAMA...
...THEY'RE GONNA SPREAD IT ALL OVER THE VILLAGE IN AN ACT OF TERRORISM...
WHERE'D YOU COME UP WITH THAT HILARIOUS STORY?! IT'S LIKE SOME CHEESY BLOCK-BUSTER FROM AMERICA!
PARA-SITES? BIOTER-RORISM?
HEH HEH HEH!
WH-WHAT KIND OF REACTION IS THAT...?
ERK ...
OHHH! AND THEN WHAT?
OH HO! KEI-CHAN...
.....
THE SONOZAKIS ARE ONE OF THE THREE FAMILIES...
...AND THEY'RE DOING SECRET RESEARCH ...
SHE'S NOT LYING. SHE'S HONESTLY LAUGHING...

...TAKANO-SAN'S BEEN PUTTING IDEAS IN YOUR HEAD, HASN'T SHE?
WHA...!? YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS, MION!?
OH, MAN, THAT FIGURES.
ALL RIGHT, KEI-CHAN?
PON (PAT)
ぽん
LISTEN CARE-FULLY.
TAKANO-SAN...
...IS TEASING YOU, KEI-CHAN.

AND WHEN SHE RUNS INTO SOMEBODY WHO WILL TAKE HER SERIOUSLY, THEN SHE'LL REALLY LIGHT INTO 'EM.
SHE MAKES UP RIDICULOUS STORIES BASED ON HINAMIZAWA'S HISTORY.
TAKANO-SAN IS FAMOUS IN THE VILLAGE FOR BEING AN OCCULT FANATIC.
... EH ...?


SOMETHING ABOUT UFOS LANDING IN ANCIENT ONIGA-FUCHI AND THE VILLAGERS BATTLING THE ALIENS.
SHE TOLD THIS OLD MAN ABOUT HER UFO THEORY.

THAT WOULD NEVER HAPPEN IN THIS DAY AND AGE.
ACTUALLY, WE'RE GOING THE OTHER WAY
SO THE SONOZAKI FAMILY ISN'T PLOTTING AN OYASHIRO-SAMA REFORMATION?

O-OH... THAT'S ...
AND IT FIT SO PERFECTLY WITH THE OYASHIRO-SAMA LEGEND...
MIIN (SUUZZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN

WE'RE PLANNING ON GETTING A HIGH-WAY RUNNING THROUGH HERE BY THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.
RIGHT NOW, THE THREE FAMILIES ARE TALKING ABOUT OPENING UP HINAMIZAWA TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

S-SO THE THEORY ABOUT THE INFECTIOUS PARASITES—
IF THAT WERE TRUE, THE WHOLE COUNTRY WOULD BE TALKING ABOUT IT.
FOR ONE THING, HOW WOULD ONE LITTLE NURSE LIKE TAKANO-SAN BE ABLE TO CONFIRM THE EXISTENCE OF A PARASITE?
IT WOULD BE IMPOS-SIBLE FOR ONE PERSON TO GATHER THAT MUCH EVIDENCE.

SO... SO WHAT ABOUT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY'S SPECIAL FORCES!?
THEY SUCCESS-FULLY KID-NAPPED THE MINISTER OF CON-STRUC-TION'S GRANDSON. DIDN'T THEY!!?

THAT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.
SOMEBODY ELSE DID THE KIDNAPPING, AND WE ALL JUST TALK ABOUT IT LIKE THE SONOZAKIS ORGANIZED IT.
I DON'T KNOW WHO DID IT, BUT IT REALLY DID THE TRICK.
B...
BUT ...

LIKE THE WHITE VAN THAT DROVE UP TO THE SCHOOL A LITTLE WHILE AGO?
WHA ...!?
A WHITE VAN?
BUT... THERE REALLY WAS A WHITE VAN FOLLOWING RENA...
WHAT !?
WH—
THEY'RE AT THE SCHOOL?
NO! THEY CAN'T BE...
ZU (WHOOSH)
WHAT'S WRONG?
JUST A— KEI-CHAN!
DADA (DASH)
A!! A!!

!!
TOYOTA

WHAT ARE THEY DOING HERE...?
IT'S THE VAN THAT WAS AFTER RENA...

THANKS FOR YOUR PATRONAGE!
WHO THE HELL ARE THESE GUYS...?
HE'S FRIENDS WITH CHIE-SENSEI ...?
WHA ...?
I'M COUNTING ON YOUR SERVICES AGAIN TODAY.
YOU GET MORE GORGEOUS BY THE DAY, SENSEI! GEH-HEH-HEH!
YES, MA'AM! WELL, TIME TO GET STARTED!
OH, MAEBARA-KUN.
CHIE-SENSEI!... WHO WAS THAT MAN...?

I ASKED OKONOGI LANDSCAPING TO DO SOME MAINTENANCE ON THE PLANTS BEFORE SUMMER HITS.
HE'S THE GARDENER.

HE ISN'T IN THE SPECIAL FORCES ...?
A GARDENER ...?

I THINK THEY SAID THEY GOT LOST ON THE WAY HOME TRYING TO TAKE A SHORTCUT.
YES. I HAD THEM COME OVER AFTER SCHOOL TO TAKE A LOOK AT THINGS.

SEN-SEI...
...WERE THEY HERE YESTERDAY TOO...?

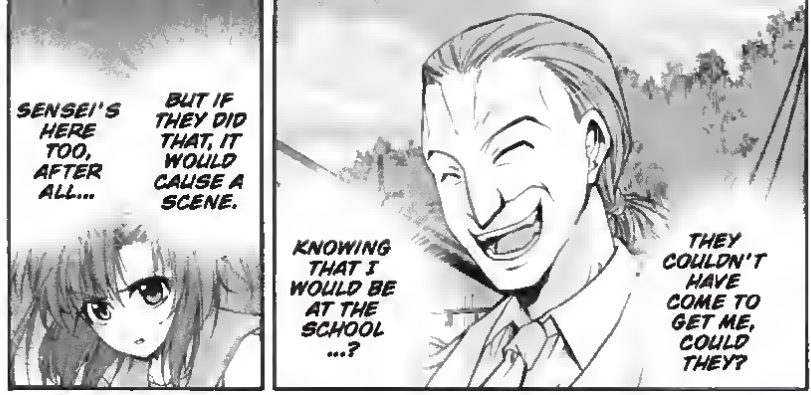
THAT'S WHY THEY WERE OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NO-WHERE...
...I-IS THAT RIGHT ...?

SO...SO EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED UNTIL NOW ...
...WAS ALL A MISUNDER-STANDING!?
?
THE SONOZAKIS AREN'T PLOTTING ANY CON-SPIRACIES.
THE GUYS I THOUGHT WERE IN THE SPECIAL FORCES ARE GARDENERS.
...WERE JUST TAKANO-SAN'S WILD STORIES.
AND THE PARASITES AND THE OYASHIRO-SAMA FANATICS...
I TOTALLY FELL FOR TAKANO-SAN'S CRAZY HOAX!!
WHAT WAS I THINK-ING?

RENA IS STILL STUCK IN THE FANTASY.
THIS IS BAD...
I BET THAT'S WHY SHE ASSUMED TAKANO-SAN'S STORIES WERE TRUE.
THAT RENA. SHE HASN'T BEEN FEELING WELL.
...OR SHE MIGHT GO OVER THE EDGE AND DO SOME-THING CRAZY.
I HAVE TO HURRY AND CLEAR UP THE MISUNDER-STANDINGS ...
DAMMIT! I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS!!

A LITTLE EARLIER...
WHY ...?

WHY...?
WHY IS THAT WHITE VAN HERE AT SCHOOL!?


SENSEI'S HERE TOO, AFTER ALL...
BUT IF THEY DID THAT, IT WOULD CAUSE A SCENE.
KNOWING THAT I WOULD BE AT THE SCHOOL ...?
THEY COULDN'T HAVE COME TO GET ME, COULD THEY?

は、
HA... (GASP)

THEY'RE FROM THE SONOZAKI FAMILY SPECIAL FORCES...
WHAT'S GOING ON!?

IF SHE'S FRIENDS WITH THEM, THAT MEANS...

SHE'S TALKING TO THEM ABOUT SOMETHING?
CHIE-SEN-SEI...

...WHAT IF THAT'S NOT THE REASON?

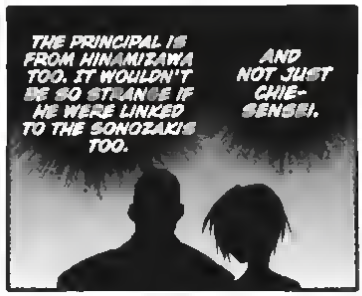
...WHEN THE SCHOOL WAS ALMOST SHUT DOWN...
...CHIE-SENSEI WAS THE TEACHER ...
...WHO THE SONOZAKIS BROUGHT IN TO FORCE THE SCHOOL TO STAY OPEN.

IN OTHER WORDS, CHIE-SENSEI ...
...HAS BEEN BACKED BY THE SONOZAKI FAMILY ALL ALONG!

...TO CATCH ME!!

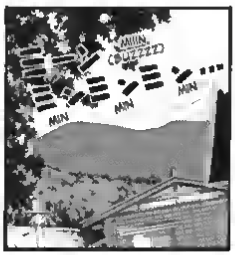
AND NOW SHE'S WORKING WITH THE MEN IN THE WHITE VAN ...

I HAVE TO RUN...
TA (STEP)
TA
TA...


THE PRINCIPAL IS FROM HINAMIZAWA TOO. IT WOULDN'T BE SO STRANGE IF HE WERE LINKED TO THE SONOZAKI'S TOO.
AND NOT JUST CHIE-SENSEI.

...THEY'LL GET ME!!
IF I STAY AT SCHOOL...

HAA
HAA (HUFF)
HAA


MMMN (BUZZZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN

WHAT CHANGED ...?
WHAT CHANGED BETWEEN YESTER-DAY AND TODAY...?
WHY WOULD THEY COME OUT IN THE OPEN TO GET ME TODAY?
!!?
!!?
BUT WHY TODAY?
I'M ONE PERSON YOU CAN TRUST.
HA (GASP)
は...
ピタ...
PITA (STOP)

LAST NIGHT, I TOLD KEIICHI-KUN...
...ABOUT THE SCRAP-BOOK...
NO!
I TALKED !!
IT REACHED THE SONOZAKIS' EARS...
...AND THE SPECIAL FORCES HAVE COME TO TAKE ACTION.
NO, WAIT. HOLD ON, RENA RYUGU.
HOW WOULD THE SONOZAKIS KNOW WHAT I TOLD KEIICHI-KUN...?

BE-
CAUSE
...
BECAUSE
...
...TOLD MII-
CHAN...?
...KEI-
ICHI-
KUN
...
IT
CAN'T
BE.
NO...
GYUUU
(SQUEEZE)
キュッ...

KATA (SHIVER)
KATA
NO...
KEIICHI-KUN... HE...
...BETRAYED ME?
KEIICHI-KUN...
THAT CAN'T...

...HE BETRAYED ME...

カナカナカナカナカナ
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA
カナカナカナカナ
...I HAD NO IDEA HOW TERRIBLE TAKANO-SAN'S SCRAPBOOK REALLY WAS...
AT THAT TIME...
...OR HOW MUCH THE "TRUTH" WRITTEN INSIDE IT...
...WAS EATING AWAY AT RENA'S MIND...

AND MII-CHAN...
KEIICHI-KUN BETRAYED ME...
THE SONOZAKI FAMILY IS AFTER THE SCRAPBOOK IN MY POSSES-SION.
...THEY'RE TRYING TO USE BIOLOGICAL TERRORISM TO UNLEASH A GREAT DISASTER IN HINAMIZAWA.
TO REVIVE FAITH IN OYASHIRO-SAMA...
IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING, MY DAD AND I AND EVERY-ONE IN THE VILLAGE WILL BE KILLED.
I HAVE TO DO SOME-THING!!

CHAPTER 9: STUPEFACTION

MIIN CRUZZZZ
MIIN
MIIN
MIIN
KEI-CHAAAN!
YOU'RE WORRYING TOO MUCH.

IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW SERIOUSLY RENA IS TAKING TAKANO-SAN'S HORROR STORIES.
WE'LL ALL LAUGH ABOUT IT IN THE END.
THAT MIGHT BE TRUE...
RENA SUDDENLY LEFT SCHOOL EARLY AND WENT HOME BY HERSELF...
...STILL BELIEVING TAKANO-SAN'S TALL TALE.
I HOPE MION'S RIGHT AND THAT WE'LL ALL LAUGH ABOUT THIS LATER.
BUT...

...AND I WAS TOTALLY FALLING FOR THEM TOO...
...YESTERDAY, RENA WAS COMPLETELY POSSESSED BY TAKANO-SAN'S FANTASIES...

TAKANO-SAN'S SCRAPBOOK HAS SOME KIND OF EVIL POWER...
...THAT DRIVES ANYONE WHO READS IT INSANE.

OH? RENA-SAN ISN'T WITH YOU?
?
...I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
AND RENA'S BEEN WALKING AROUND WITH IT FOR DAYS.

DIDN'T YOU TELL ME A WHILE AGO THAT RENA-SAN HAD SOMETHING OF KASAI-SAN'S?
WHAT'S UP, YOU TWO?
WHO'S THE GUY IN THE SHADES?

HELLO-ELLO!
...SHION?

OH, THAT'S TOO BAD. RENA WENT HOME A WHILE AGO.
RENA-SAN SAID SHE WANTED TO TALK TO HIM IN PERSON ...

!?
WE WERE JUST AT RENA-SAN'S HOUSE... BUT NO ONE WAS HOME.
SO WE THOUGHT SHE MUST STILL BE AT SCHOOL AND CAME HERE.

OH? SHE DID?

RENA'S ...
...NOT AT HOME...?
カナカナカナ...
KANA
KANA
KANA CHIRP
DEEP IN THE MOUNTAINS OF YAGOUCHI ...

THEY'RE GONE.
HAA
HA
HAA
GONE. GONE. GONE.
ZAKKU
ZAKKU
ZAKKU

I THOUGHT I WAS OVER-THINKING IT.
I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD ACTUALLY BE HAPPENING.
HAA
HAA
HAA

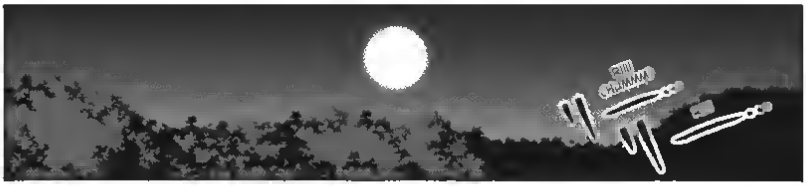
BUT THE BODIES...
...ARE GONE!

I KNOW THIS IS WHERE WE BURIED RINA AND TEPPEI.
I'M POSITIVE THIS IS WHERE...
SARA
SARA

MII-CHAN IS A SONOZAKI. I HAVE NO DOUBT SHE MOVED THE BODIES.
IT WAS MII-CHAN.
BUT WHY?
BECAUSE...

THE FACT THAT SHE'S MOVING SO QUICKLY PROVES IT.
...MII-CHAN MEANS BUSINESS!
...TO GET THEM TO INVES-TIGATE ME AS A SUSPECT.
...SHE WANTS TO GIVE THE BODIES TO THE POLICE...
興宮警察
SIGN: OKINOMIYA POLICE
...I KNOW!
I HAVE TO MAKE MY MOVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TOO...
BUT IF ANYONE MIGHT LISTEN TO ME, IT'S OOISHI-SAN.
IF HE ALREADY KNOWS ABOUT RINA AND TEPPEI'S BODIES, HE MIGHT ARREST ME.
I'LL TELL OOISHI-SAN EVERY-THING.
OOISHI-SAN.

I WILL FIGHT.
I WON'T LET THEM BEAT ME LIKE THIS...!!

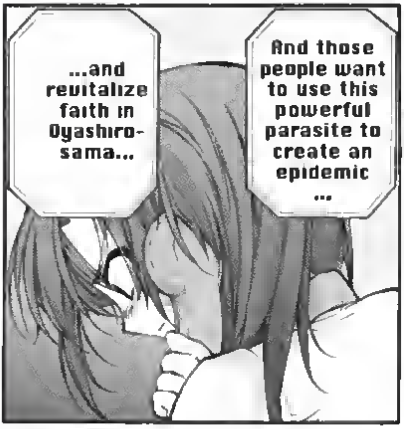

PAPAPAPA

IS THIS TRUE, RYUGU-SAN!?

BIO-TER-ROR-ISM!?

YES... I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'LL BELIEVE ME...
...BUT I'LL TELL YOU EVERYTHING.
...IT SOUNDS LIKE HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT RINA YET.

...ALL DEPENDS ON WHETHER OR NOT I GET OOISHI-SAN ON MY SIDE.
MY ABILITY TO FIGHT THE SONOZAKI CONSPIRACY ...


...and revitalize faith in Oyashiro-sama...
And those people want to use this powerful parasite to create an epidemic ...

THAT'S INCREDIBLE... SO THERE'S A PARASITE LOCAL TO HINAMI-ZAWA...
PEOPLE ARE CON-DUCTING RESEARCH ON IT...

NO, RYUGU-SAN.
I DO BELIEVE YOU.
.....
I know we're talking about the Sonozaki family, but that's going too far...
...YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME...?
SO ...
REALLY ...?
...R...
I mean ...
Yes. It's an out-rageous idea, but I believe it.

WHA ...?
... EH ...?

The Sonozaki Group...
...is, in fact, out looking for you.

According to a reliable source ...
...one of the Sonozaki higher-ups wants to find you.

The Sonozaki Group is a gangster organization that supports the Sonozaki family.
And its leaders are in a frenzy...
...looking for an upstanding girl such as yourself...

I can't think of any reason for that...
...unless what you're saying is true.

MII-CHAN, YOU WOULD GO THAT FAR...?
EVEN THE SONOZAKI GROUP IS AFTER ME...

WE CAN'T LET THEM CARRY OUT THEIR TERRORIST PLOT!!
CAN'T THE POLICE DO SOMETHING TO STOP THEM!?
DAMN THOSE SONOZAKIS!
I DIDN'T THINK THEY WERE THIS CRAZY!!
BUT THAT'S WHOLESALE TERRORISM!

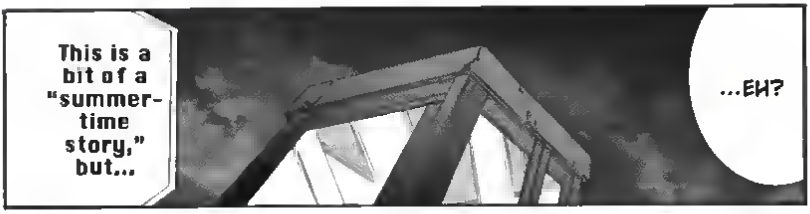
Hmm, there's still not enough proof.
GYUUU (SQUEEZE)
The theories in Miyo Takano's scrapbook are just conjecture.
And the fact that they're after you is no more than circumstantial evidence.

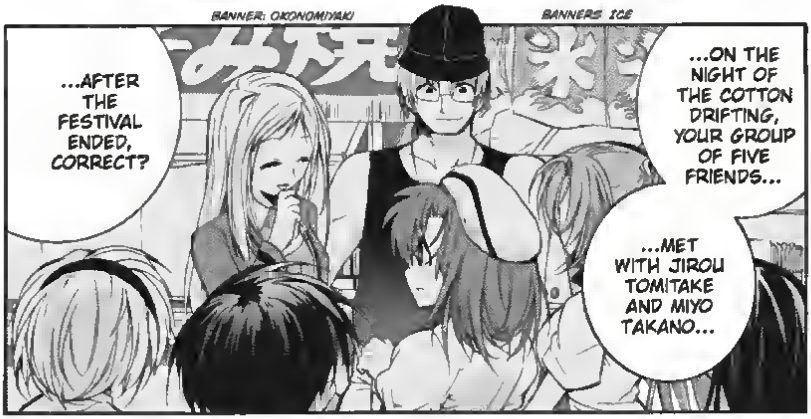
BUT IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING, EVERYONE IN HINAMIZAWA IS GOING TO DIE!
ARE YOU TELLING ME TO SIT BACK AND WATCH IT HAPPEN!?
Calm down, Ryugu-san.
Calm down.

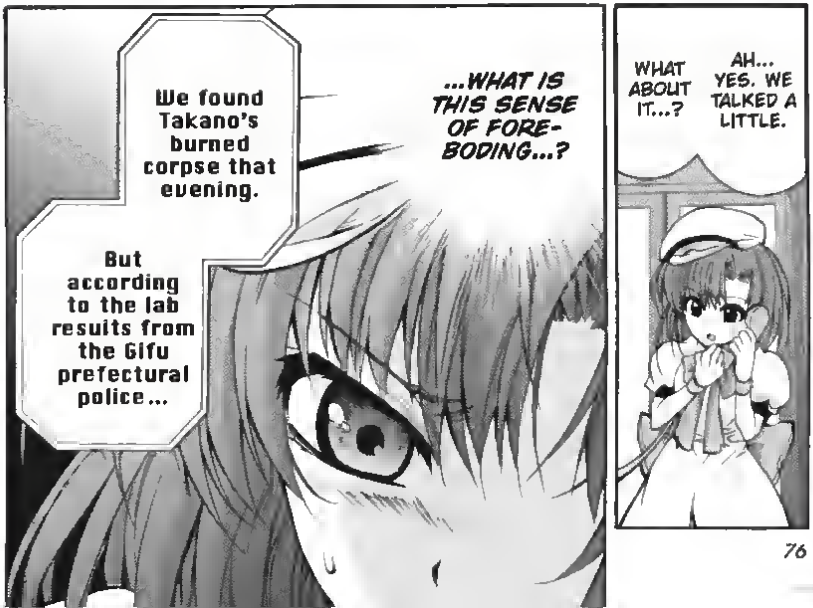
I HAVEN'T BEEN WORKING HERE FORTY YEARS JUST FOR SHOW, AFTER ALL.
PLEASE, COUNT ON ME.
NN-FU-FU!

WITH SUCH A LARGE-SCALE PLOT, THERE'S GOT TO BE A LOOSE THREAD SOMEWHERE.
AND WE'RE GOING TO FIND IT.
PAAAN (SLAM)

RIGHT NOW, MY ONLY CHOICE IS TO RELY ON OOISHI-SAN'S HELP...
...ALL RIGHT. I'M COUNTING ON YOU ...
OOISHI-SAN...
YES...TO THINK SHE WAS KILLED FOR EXPOSING A TERRIBLE CONSPIRACY ...
Still, Miyo Takano left us quite the parting gift, didn't she?
There's just one thing that baffles me.
About the way she died...
ACTU-ALLY...


This is a bit of a "summer-time story," but...
...EH?


BANNER: OKONOMIYAKI
BANNER: ICE
...AFTER THE FESTIVAL ENDED, CORRECT?
...ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, YOUR GROUP OF FIVE FRIENDS...
...MET WITH JIROU TOMITAKE AND MIYO TAKANO...


We found Takano's burned corpse that evening.
But according to the lab results from the Gifu prefectural police...
...WHAT IS THIS SENSE OF FORE-BODING...?
WHAT ABOUT IT...?
AH... YES. WE TALKED A LITTLE.

...AT THE TIME THE BODY WAS DISCOVERED ...
...SHE HAD ALREADY BEEN DEAD FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

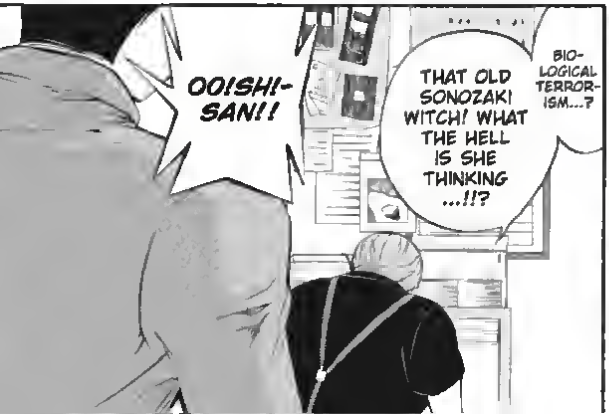
...ON THE NIGHT OF THE COTTON DRIFTING, MIYO TAKANO...
IN OTHER WORDS ...

EH ...?

...WAS ALREADY DEAD.
ZOKU (CHILL)
WHA ...!!?
...

WHEN I MET HER, TAKANO-SAN...
...IT CAN'T BE...
Well, it could have been a mistake in the lab.
GOKU (GULP)
...WAS ALREADY DEAD...?

OR WAS IT...?
WAS IT JUST A MISTAKE ...?

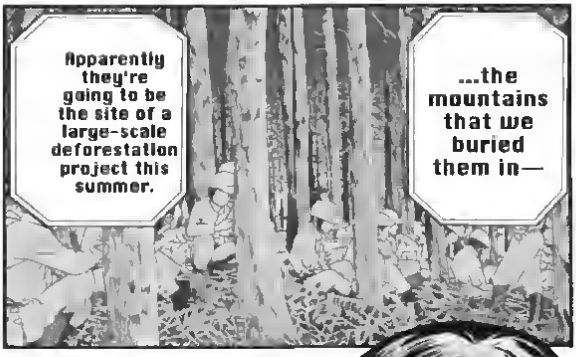

OOISHI-SAN!!
THAT OLD SONOZAKI WITCH! WHAT THE HELL IS SHE THINKING ...!!?
BIO-LOGICAL TERROR-ISM...?

BACHA (CLUNK)

WHAT !?
WE'VE IDENTIFIED THE MAN LOOKING FOR REINA RYUGU!
IT'S TATSUYOSHI KASAI!!
ROGER THAT !!
KUMA-CHAN! WE'RE GOING TO TAKE REINA RYUGU INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY!
GET THE UNDER-COVER PATROL CARS!!
KASAI IS THE SONOZAKI GROUP'S NUMBER-TWO MAN ...
...REINA RYUGU. THIS IS STARTING TO LOOK VERY BAD...
WHAT !?
A LITTLE WHILE LATER...

THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR RENA!?
Yeah. A lot of under-cover patrol cars have come into the village.
THE POLICE... IT CAN'T BE...
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE?
THEY COULDN'T HAVE?
NO, THEY COULDN'T HAVE.
Did the police find Rina's body!?

...and dispose of them in a secret place.
I had the Sonozakis take the bodies...


Apparently they're going to be the site of a large-scale deforestation project this summer.
...the mountains that we buried them in—

Well, actually...
HUH..? WHY IN THE WORLD WOULD YOU DO THAT...?

I SEE... THAT'S MY MION.
So I went ahead and took care of it.

APPARENTLY THE POLICE KNEW THAT TEPPEI HOJO HAD GOTTEN CLOSE TO THE RYUGUS.
So why would the police be after Rena?

Of course we do!
MION! WE HAVE TO DO SOME-THING TO PROTECT RENA!

Maybe that's how Rena's name got brought up.
DAMMIT! BUT RENA'S SO VULNER-ABLE RIGHT NOW!
PON
CWHAMO

...TO GET TO HER BEFORE THE POLICE DO.
WHEREVER RENA IS, I'LL USE ALL OF THE POWER OF THE SONOZAKI FAMILY ...

WE EVEN HAVE THE BEST LAWYERS WORKING FOR THE SONOZAKI FAMILY.
WE CAN MAKE AS MANY WITNESSES AS WE NEED TO PROVE HER ALIBI.
AND AFTER WE'VE FOUND HER, WE'LL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO KEEP HER SAFE.

MION... I KNEW I COULD RELY ON YOU...
... WOW. THE SONOZAKIS REALLY ARE POWERFUL ...

WE WON'T ABANDON OUR FRIEND, NO MATTER WHAT!!

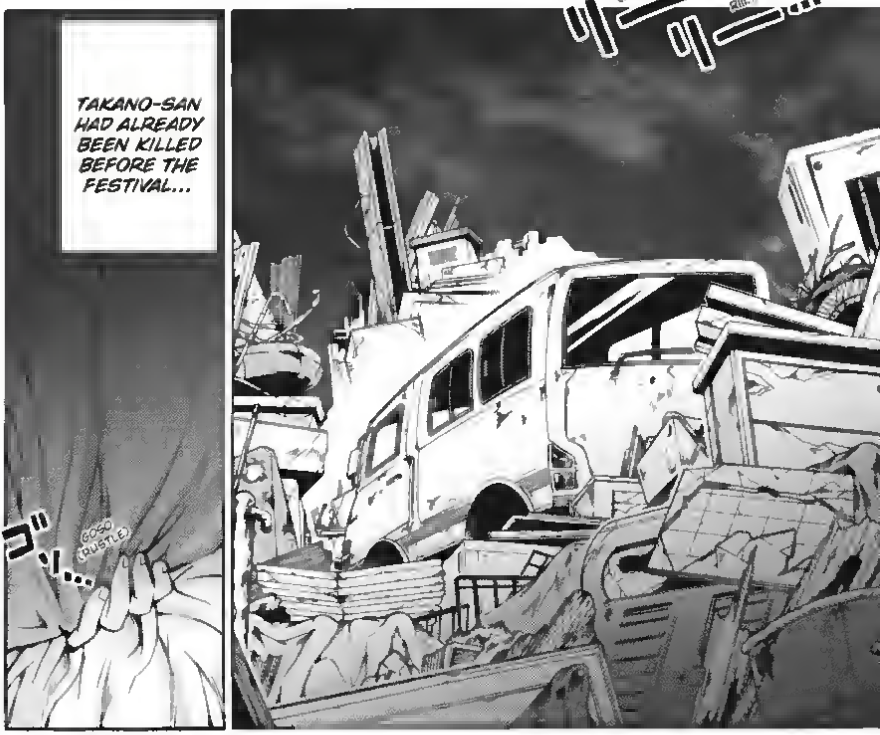
THE DAM WAR GAVE US A LOT OF EXPERIENCE.
I'M ALREADY TAMPERING WITH INFORMATION.
Tampering with information?

I'VE STARTED A FALSE LEAD THAT RENA WAS SEEN AROUND GOGURA.
THAT SHOULD KEEP THE POLICE DISTRACTED.

I SEE...
I FEEL SO PATHETIC, RELYING ON YOU FOR EVERYTHING.

But there are things only you can do, Kei-chan.
EH?

And if she's emotionally worn out, I want you to help her.
When she does, take her under your wing immediately.
...SO SHE MIGHT COME TO YOU FOR HELP.
RENA TRUSTS YOU MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE...
MION... I UNDERSTAND.
THAT'S RIGHT...I HAVE TO PROTECT RENA.
...WHERE ARE YOU...?
RENA...


TAKANO-SAN HAD ALREADY BEEN KILLED BEFORE THE FESTIVAL...
GOGO (RUSTLE)
(HUMMM)

...THAT I SAW ON THE DAY OF THE FESTIVAL ...?
THEN WHO WAS THE TAKANO-SAN...

...WAS.
SOMEONE WHO WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THERE
...PRESENTED A THEORY TO EXPLAIN THIS MYSTERY...
BUT IN THE SCRAPBOOK, TAKANO-SAN...
FOR A HUMAN BEING
THAT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR A HUMAN BEING
IF TAKANO-SAN'S TIME OF DEATH IS CORRECT ...
...THEN THAT THEORY IS THE ONLY THING THAT MAKES ANY SENSE...
...MY NECK ITCHES ...
BORI (SCRATCH)
BORI...
WAS IT REALLY JUST A SLIPUP ON THE POLICE'S PART...?
BUT I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY WOULD HAVE THAT KIND OF POWER.

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AROUND, JUST IN CASE.
—!!
...SHE'S NOT GONNA BE HERE.
PIKU (TWITCH)
ZA
ZA
ZA
THEY'VE COME TO FIND ME...!!
IT'S THE SONOZAKIS ...
GABA (CRASH)

...IF THEY LOOK INSIDE THIS CAR, IT'S ALL OVER!
ザッ ザッ
THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER ...
THEY WON'T FIND YOU.
ドクン
DOKUN (B THUMP)
...CALM DOWN! YOU'LL BE FINE AS LONG AS YOU DON'T MAKE A SOUND.
ザッ
DOKUN
ドクン
DON'T COME OVER HERE...!!
PLEASE, GO AWAY!
ザッ

...THIS IS ATSUSHI.
...YES... GOGURA!?
YES, I UNDER-STAND.

WHAT'S UP?
SOME-BODY'S SPOTTED HER.

APPARENTLY REINA RYUGU IS IN GOGURA.
EH ...!?

BEEEEEEEEP

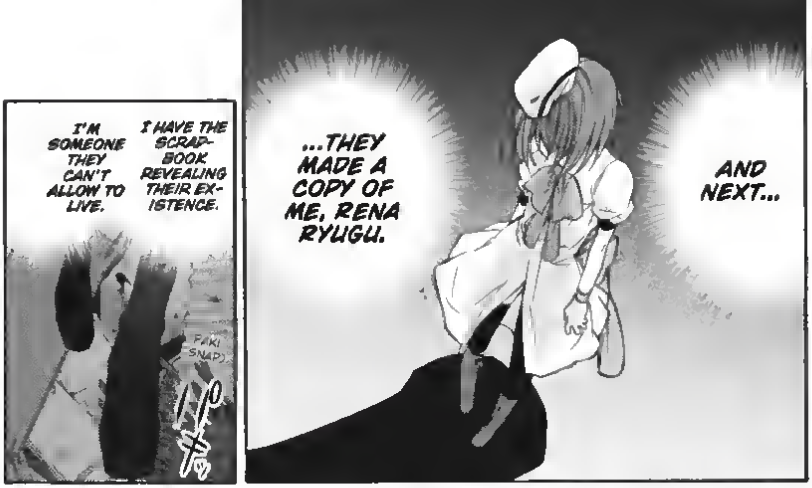
FIRST, WE HAVE TO MEET UP WITH KUMA-CHAN.
STOP WHINING. WE'RE GOING BACK
WHY WOULD THEY MOBILIZE THE ENTIRE FORCE...
...JUST FOR A LITTLE SCRAP-BOOK?
DAMN, WE HAVE TO GO ALL THE WAY THERE TO SEARCH FOR HER?
DAMMIT, WE DON'T HAVE ENOUGH OFFICERS
SOMEHOW, I MADE IT...
GOSO (RUSTLE)
HO! (WHEW!)
...THEY WERE SAYING...
BUT...

I'M RIGHT HERE.
APPARENTLY REINA RYUGU IS IN GOGURA.
SO WHY ...!?
KIN (HUMMM)
KIN
NOW YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT IT..
CALM DOWN, RENA RYUGU. JUST COOL DOWN.
GYU (SQUEEZE)

...BUT I WAS SEEN IN OGURA.
I'M RIGHT HERE...
...BUT SHE WAS AT THE COTTON DRIFTING.
TAKANO-SAN WAS ALREADY DEAD...
THERE ARE TWO OF ME AND TAKANO-SAN.
THE IMPOS-SIBLE IS HAPPEN-ING—
TAKANO-SAN WROTE...
...IS THE THEORY WRITTEN IN TAKANO-SAN'S SCRAPBOOK.
THE ONLY THING THAT CAN ACCOUNT FOR THIS INEXPLICA-BLE TURN OF EVENTS...

THEY ...
THEY HAVE A MORE TERRIFYING POWER...
...THEY'RE NOT ORDINARY PARA-SITES.
...HUMAN CLONES.
...CAN MAKE...
...THEY ERASE THE HUMANS WHO LEARN THEIR SECRET.
THEN...

...AND REPLACE THEM WITH A COPY!!
...THAT THE ORIGINAL TAKANO-SAN'S CHARRED CORPSE WAS DISCOVERED.
IT WAS A PAINFUL MISTAKE ON THEIR PART...
THAT'S HOW THEY'VE PROTECTED HINAMIZAWA'S SECRET ALL THIS TIME.
THAT WAY, NO ONE WILL NOTICE IF THEY ELIMINATE THE HUMAN WHO LEARNED THEIR SECRET.
IT ALL ADDS UP!!!
IT ADDS UP...


I'M SOMEONE THEY CAN'T ALLOW TO LIVE.
I HAVE THE SCRAP-BOOK REVEALING THEIR EX-ISTENCE.
(FAKI SNAP)
...THEY MADE A COPY OF ME, RENA RYUGU.
AND NEXT...

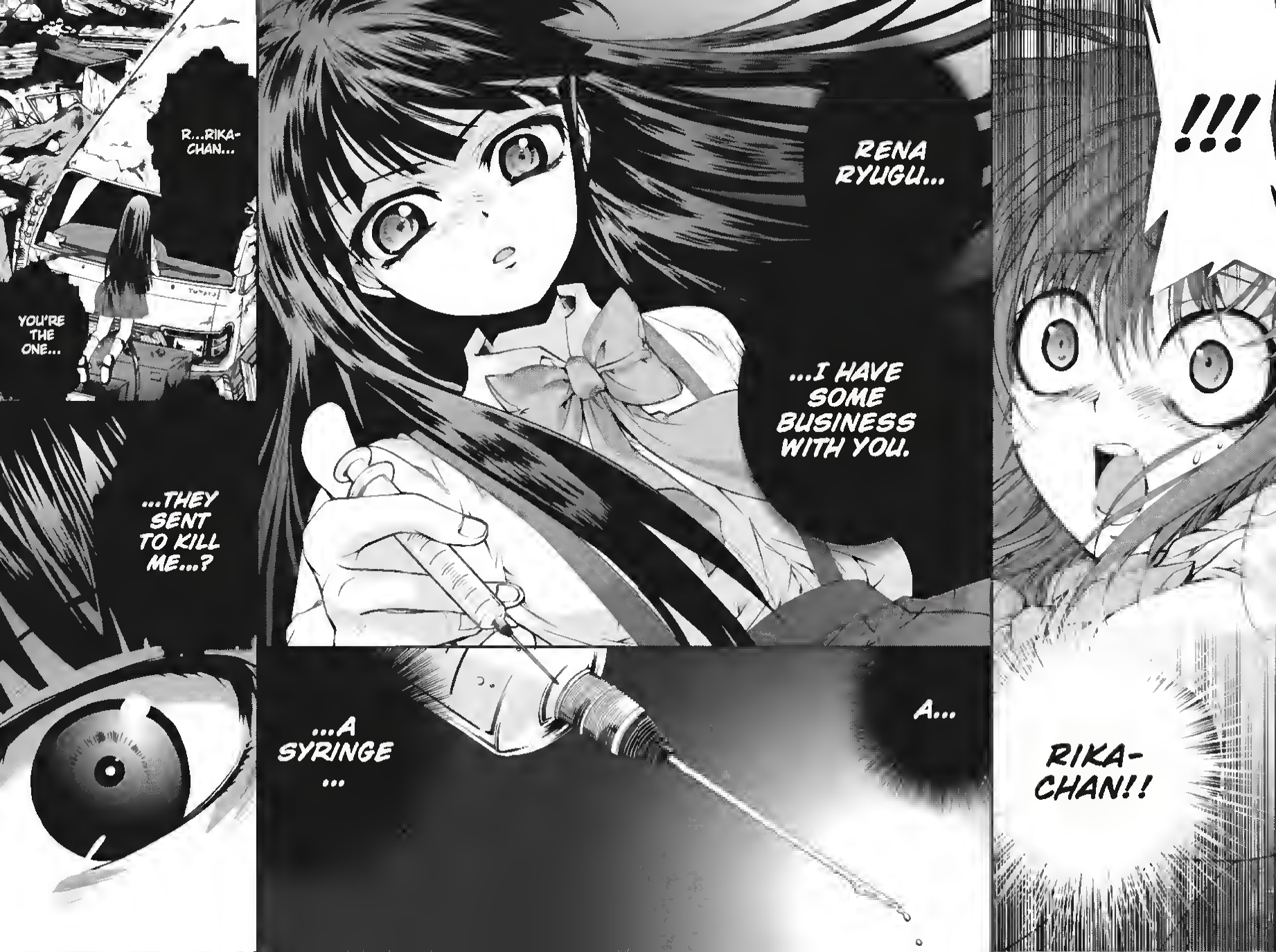
THEY CREATED HER...
SO THEY'VE CREATED A RENA RYUGU IN GOGURA TO TAKE MY PLACE.

...WHAT ELSE ...?
...AND NOW WHAT?

THEY'LL COME...
...TO ERASE ME...

(SQUEEZE)

...AND FIGURE OUT MY NEXT MOVE...
I'LL CONTACT OOISHI-SAN...
AS LONG AS I'M IN MY HIDE-OUT, IT WILL TAKE THEM SOME TIME TO FIND ME.
...NO, IT'S ALL RIGHT.


R...RIKA-CHAN...
YOU'RE THE ONE...
...THEY SENT TO KILL ME...?
RENA RYUGU...
...I HAVE SOME BUSINESS WITH YOU.
...A SYRINGE ...
A...
!!!
RIKA-CHAN!!

CHAPTER 10: SECRETS
RIKA-CHAN... YOU'RE THE ONE...

...THEY SENT TO KILL ME...?

MEW!
YOU'RE MAKING A SCARY FACE, RENA, SIR.
にぱ☆

...WHO ELSE DO I LOOK LIKE, SIR?
ARE YOU REALLY RIKA-CHAN...?

BOWLU (WINCE)
!

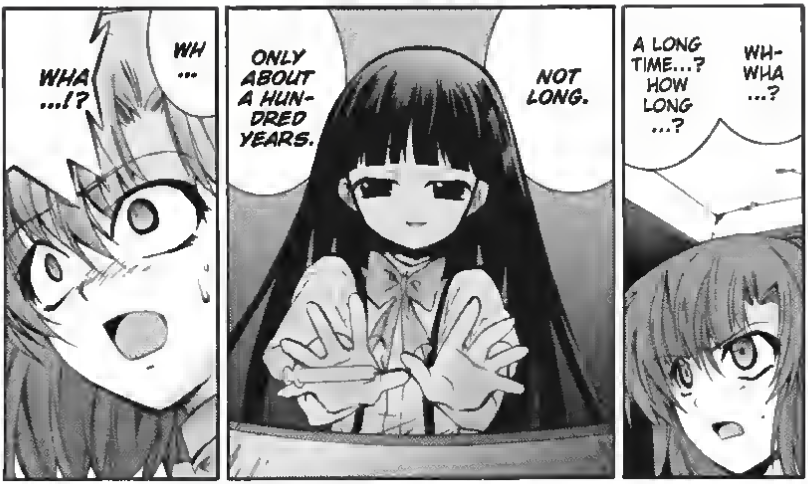
RIKA-CHAN WOULD NEVER COME OUT TO A PLACE LIKE THIS AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT.
BUT SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT.

THE PERSON STANDING IN FRONT OF ME IS RIKA-CHAN.
IT'S TRUE ...

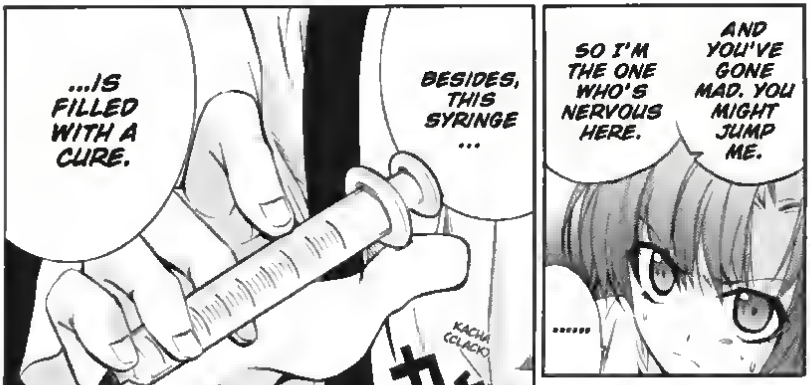
YOU'RE NOT RIKA-CHAN.
...YOU WON'T FOOL ME.
SHE MUST BE...
AND... THAT SYRINGE ...
©A-1/2004
YOU'RE NOT MY FRIEND RIKA FURUDE!
JUST WHO ARE YOU!?
...HEE.

FROM THE MOMENT I MET YOU, I KNEW YOU WERE PERCEPTIVE.
I'M IMPRESSED, RENA RYUGU.
HEE HEE HEE ...
HEE ...
YOU'RE THE FIRST ONE TO HAVE SEEN THROUGH ME AND REALIZED THAT I'M NOT RIKA.

COULD IT BE THAT SHE...
TH... THEN ...
...SHE ADMITS THAT SHE'S A FAKE...
SHE ...
SHE'S A CLONE OF RIKA-CHAN...!!?
...WAS CREATED BY THEM?
I HAVE THOUGHT OF IT AS MY OWN NAME FOR QUITE A LONG TIME. AFTER ALL.
...BUT I'M GOING TO GO AHEAD AND CALL MYSELF RIKA ANY-WAY.
CREATURES THAT CAN CLONE HUMANS ...!
THEY REALLY DO EXIST ...


WHA ...!?
WH ...
ONLY ABOUT A HUNDRED YEARS.
NOT LONG.
A LONG TIME...? HOW LONG ...?
WH-WHA ...?

YOU DON'T NEED TO BE AFRAID.
HOWEVER MANY YEARS SHE MAY LIVE, RIKA FURUDE IS JUST A LITTLE GIRL.
WH... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT ...!!?


...IS FILLED WITH A CURE.
BESIDES, THIS SYRINGE ...
KACHA (CLACK)
SO I'M THE ONE WHO'S NERVOUS HERE.
AND YOU'VE GONE MAD. YOU MIGHT JUMP ME.
.....

IT'S THE EXACT OPPOSITE...
...OF THE INJECTION THAT KILLED TOMITAKE.
...THAT AN INJECTION KILLED TOMITAKE-SAN...
SH-SHE DIDN'T EVEN HESITATE TO ADMIT ...
GOKU (CHILL)
THEY ARE THE RING-LEADERS BEHIND OYASHIRO-SAMA'S CURSE!!
IT'S JUST LIKE IN THE SCRAP-BOOK.

I'M "SICK" ...!?
.....
IF I GIVE YOU THIS SHOT, YOU'LL FEEL BETTER.
IT'S TRUE.
YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE SICK, THAT'S ALL.
SHIT (POINT)
!..
I KNOW ALL ABOUT HOW YOU OPER-ATE !!!
!!!
Y... YOU'RE LYING, YOU'RE LYING!
BA (BOLT)
YOU'RE LYING !!
BUT THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAP-PEN!
IF YOU USE THAT, I'LL FALL RIGHT INTO YOUR HANDS. I'LL SCRATCH MY THROAT UNTIL I DIE!
THAT SHOT WILL GIVE ME THE GUSHING MAGGOT DIS-EASE!

I'LL FIGHT YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY !!!
I WON'T LET YOU KILL ME!!
IS SHE GOING TO COME AT ME BY FORCE...?
KKH...
KUKU (CHUCKLE)
フフ...
OH...
.....
STEP
ﾅﾅ...

WHAT IS SHE SAYING ...?
EH ...?
A FROG AT THE BOTTOM OF A WELL HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD.
THEN DO AS YOU WISH.
I USED TO BE DESPERATE TO FIX THIS MADDENING WORLD...
... BUT I'M TIRED NOW ...
I HAVE NO MORE INTEREST IN "THIS" RENA RYUGU.
I'LL MAKE SURE THINGS WORK OUT WITH THE "NEXT" RENA RYUGU.

...RENA RYUGU...?
THE NEXT...
ZAWA (MUZUMUZU)
ザワ…

THIS HINAMI-ZAWA WILL END SOON TOO.
BUT YOU KEEP DOING YOUR VERY BEST TO SURVIVE.

ARE THEY READY TO REPLACE ME SO SOON?
AND WHEN I DIE, THE NEXT RENA RYUGU WILL APPEAR AS IF NOTHING EVER HAPPENED ...!!

...SHE CAN'T MEAN ...
...THE CLONE OF ME THAT WAS SPOTTED IN GOGURA?

GOOD-BYE...
...“THIS” RENA RYUGU.
PARIN (SHATTER)

WE ARE FRIENDS IN ALMOST EVERY SCENARIO, AFTER ALL.
HEE HEE HEE!
LET'S BE FRIENDS WHEN YOU'RE THE “NEXT” RENA RYUGU, OKAY?

TAKANO-SAN'S THEORIES... WERE ALL CORRECT...
.....

THEY REPLACE HUMANS WITH CLONES THEY'VE MADE...
...AND CONTROL HINAMI-ZAWA...
I HAVE TO HURRY...
ガサ
ガサ...
ガサ

SHE SAID THERE WOULD BE A "NEXT" RENA RYUGU.
THAT RIKA CLONE ADMITTED IT OPENLY.
AND I WON'T LET THEM HAVE THEIR WAY WITH HINAMIZAWA.
I WON'T LET THERE BE A "NEXT" RENA RYUGU.
I HAVE TO GET AWAY FROM HERE, FAST.
EVENTUALLY, THE "RENA" IN FUGURA WILL COME TO TAKE MY PLACE.
I HAVE TO STOP THEM!!
I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE TRUTH. I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STAND AGAINST THEM.

BAM! (CLICK)
...WHY AM I SWEATING SO MUCH?
KKH... STILL...
BORI
BORI
BORI (SCRATCH)
BUT IT'S DARK, AND I CAN'T SEE.
I HAVE TO HURRY AND GET MY THINGS TOGETHER SO I CAN LEAVE.
JUST FOR NOW, I'LL TURN ON MY LAMP...
...I HAVE NO CHOICE. JUST FOR A LITTLE WHILE...
BAH (FUMBLE)
BAH

EEK !?
SO CHILLY
WHEN I WIPED OFF MY NECK, IT WASN'T SWEAT ...
...IT CAN'T BE.
WHY ARE THERE SO MANY...?
ARE THOSE MY HAND-PRINTS ...?
C-
CALM DOWN!
DOKKUN
DOKKUN (RACING)

IT WAS BLOOD...

RIN
CHUNMAN
RIN

I HAVE TO HURRY AND HIDE HER!!
THE POLICE ARE LOOKING FOR RENA.
AH...
UP
SOKEN

THAT SCRAP-BOOK IS NOT NORMAL.
SHE STILL BELIEVES EVERYTHING IN TAKANO-SAN'S SCRAP-BOOK.

IT EVEN HAD ME THOROUGHLY CONVINCED FOR A WHILE.
IT HAS SOME KIND OF EVIL POWER TO DRIVE ITS READERS INSANE.
I HAVE TO SNAP RENA OUT OF IT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE...
...OR I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING WILL HAPPEN THAT WE WON'T BE ABLE TO FIX!!

...
GASA CRUSH!
...I THINK SHE'D BE HERE IN THE TRASH HEAP...
THAT RENA. IF SHE'S ANYWHERE ...

HAA
HAA
HAA
HAA GASP!?

HAA (HUFF)
RENA ...!!
Y... YOU ...!?
GYO (GAPE)

IT'S COVERED IN BLOOD ...!!
WH... WHAT HAP-PENED TO YOUR NECK?
I'M GETTING ALL KINDS OF VISITORS TONIGHT.
NOW IT'S KEIICHI-KUN?
STAY BACK !!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
EH?
I WOULDN'T EXPECT ANY LESS OF MI-CHAN.
...WOW, SHE REALLY GOT ME.
THE POISON ...

WHA...?
...POISONED ME!
MII-CHAN...

IT HAD THE SAME POISON IN IT THAT KILLED TOMITAKE-SAN.
THE TAMAGOYAKI IN THE LUNCH MII-CHAN GAVE ME THE OTHER DAY.

SHE'S TRYING TO ERASE ME TO CARRY OUT "THEIR" GOALS.
MII-CHAN IS ONE OF THE SONOZAKIS.

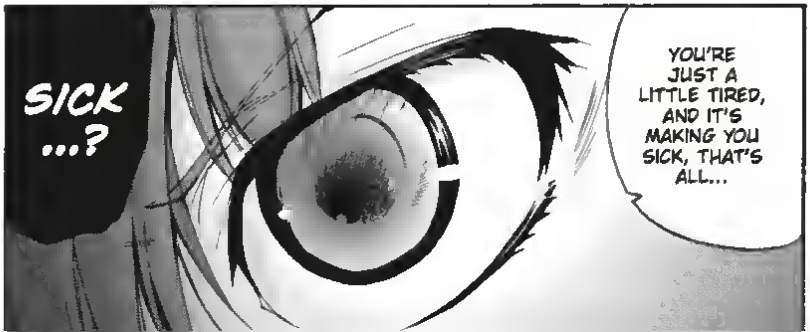
MION WOULDN'T DO THAT...
WH... WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, RENA?

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO RINA AND TEPPEI'S BODIES.
THE BODIES WE BURIED IN THE MOUNTAINS. THEY'RE GONE.
I'M POSITIVE MII-CHAN DID SOMETHING.
SHE WANTS TO USE THOSE BODIES TO GET THE POLICE TO COME AFTER ME.
!!
WAIT, RENA! UM...
IT'S TRUE THAT MION HID THE BODIES.
RENA DOESN'T KNOW THAT MION DISPOSED OF THE BODIES.
OH NO ...
BUT LISTEN! SHE HAD A REASON!
...SO IT IS TRUE...?

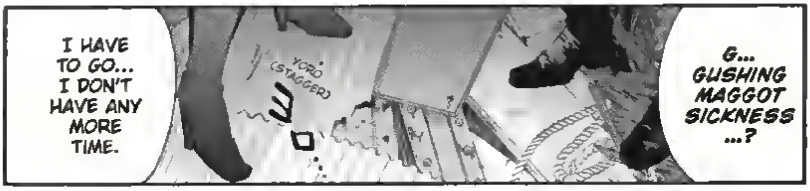
...AND THEY MIGHT HAVE FOUND THE BODIES, SO...
THE FORESTRY OFFICES ARE PLANNING SOME DEFORESTATION IN THAT AREA OVER THE SUMMER...
THAT'S THE KIND OF DIRTY GAME SHE PLAYS.
SHE WANTS TO ACT LIKE A NICE GIRL IN FRONT OF YOU, KEIICHI-KUN!
あはは
HA HA!
SO THAT'S HER EXCUSE?
PFFT... AH-HA-HA!
GYUU! (SQUEEZE)
THEY'LL DO ANY-THING TO ERASE ME!!
MII-CHAN MADE UP THE WHOLE STORY ABOUT DEFORES-TATION!

WHAT'S GOING ON...? OH MAN, RENA.
THE SCRAP-BOOK'S HOLD ON HER IS GETTING STRONGER AND STRONGER ...
.....
RENA...

...WHY DON'T YOU LIE DOWN FOR A WHILE AND GET SOME REST...?
...HEY, RENA ...


SICK ...?
YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE TIRED, AND IT'S MAKING YOU SICK, THAT'S ALL...

...IT'S TRUE. I AM COMING DOWN WITH THE GUSHING MAGGOT SICKNESS...
...BECAUSE OF MII-CHAN'S POISON.
...THAT'S WHAT THE RIKA CLONE TOLD ME TOO.


I HAVE TO GO... I DON'T HAVE ANY MORE TIME.
YORO (STAGGER)
G... GUSHING MAGGOT SICKNESS ...?

...WHAT? YOUR CLONE...?

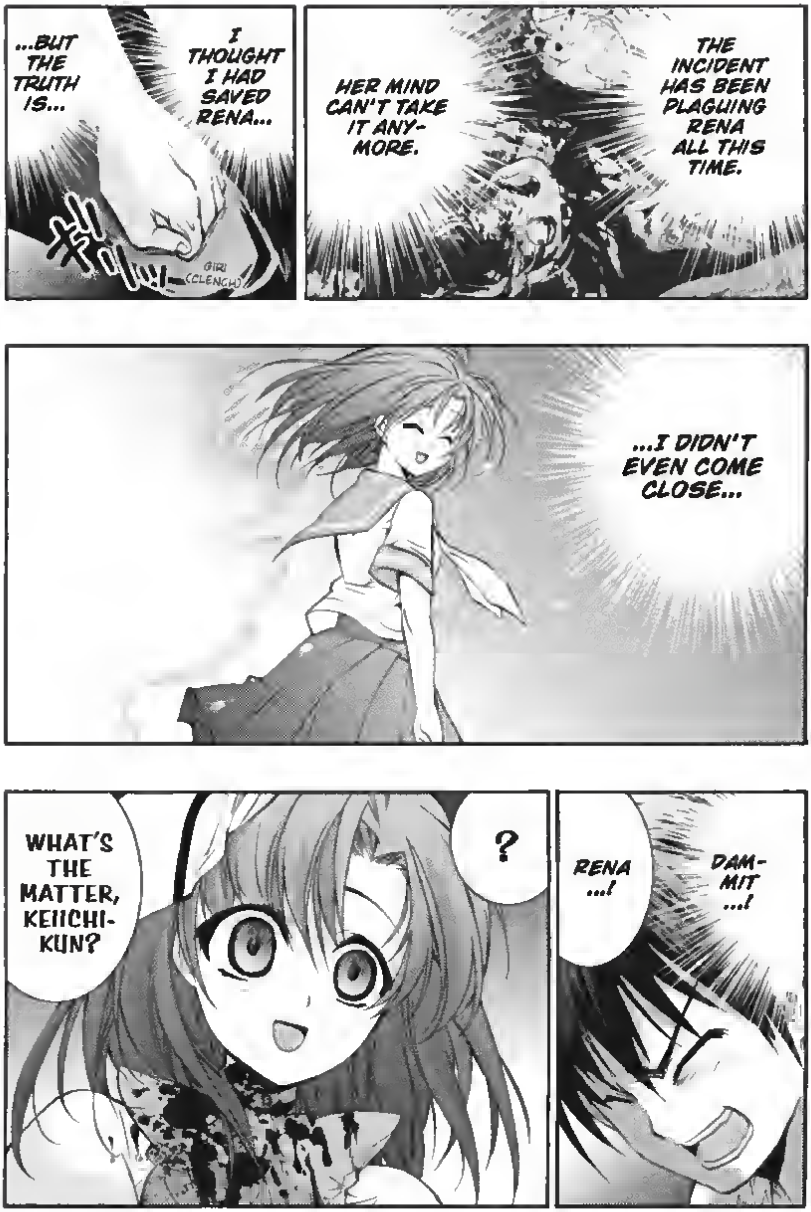
...TO KILL ME.
MY CLONE WILL BE HERE SOON...

THEY'RE ALL READY TO MAKE THE SWITCH.
AND I'M THEIR NEXT TARGET.
IT'S... A SPARE ME THAT THEY CRE-ATED.
MIYO-SAN AND RIKA-CHAN HAVE ALREADY FALLEN INTO THEIR HANDS.
WHO ARE "THEY"...?
...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT...?
THEY ARE...
THEY HAVE OUTRAGEOUS, TERRIFYING POWER—THE ABILITY TO MAKE COPIES OF PEOPLE.
...I CAN TELL YOU, KEI-ICHI-KUN...
...THEIR TRUE IDENTITY.
SFX: GU (CLENCH)
THEY'RE NOT PARA-SITES...
...AND THEY'RE NOT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY'S SPECIAL FORCES.

... ALIENS ...!!
.....!!
.....
ALI...
... RENA... YOU...
...YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY BELIEVE THAT...
OYASHIRO-SAMA WAS REALLY AN ALIEN FROM OUTER SPACE TOO.
THEY'VE ALREADY BEGUN THEIR INVASION OF EARTH.

AND WHEN A HUMAN FINDS OUT THEIR SECRET, THEY CLONE HIM OR HER AND MAKE A REPLACEMENT.
THEY'VE TAKEN CONTROL OF HINAMIZAWA BY INHABITING HUMAN HOSTS AS PARASITES.
A COPY OF RIKA-CHAN WAS JUST HERE!
AND SHE ADMITTED THAT SHE CAME FROM SPACE!!
BA (BAM)
...I REFUSE TO LET THEM BEAT ME.
BUT EVEN IF NO ONE IN THE WORLD BELIEVES ME...
...YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, DO YOU...? IT GOES AGAINST ALL COMMON SENSE, AFTER ALL.
WHA ...?

I WILL...
...SAVE YOU AND THE OTHERS!
SHE SINCERELY BELIEVES TAKANO-SAN'S OCCULT STORIES.
THAT RENA.
—NH...!!
IT CAN'T BE JUST THE SCRAPBOOK.
SHE'S SO FAR GONE.


...BUT THE TRUTH IS...
I THOUGHT I HAD SAVED RENA...
GIRI (CLENCH)
HER MIND CAN'T TAKE IT ANY-MORE.
THE INCIDENT HAS BEEN PLAGUING RENA ALL THIS TIME.
...I DIDN'T EVEN COME CLOSE...
WHAT'S THE MATTER, KEIICHI-KUN?
?
RENA ...!
DAM-MIT ...!

PAN (SLAP)
K... KEIICHI-KUN...?
RENA! SNAP OUT OF IT...!

DID YOU FORGET ALREADY ?
IT HAPPENED RIGHT HERE, JUST A FEW DAYS AGO.
OUR GROUP OF FRIENDS ALL JOINED HANDS...
...AND ACKNOWLEDGED EACH OTHER AS FAMILY.
GYU (CLENCH)
.....
IF YOU HONESTLY BELIEVE THAT ALIENS ARE INVADING THE EARTH ...
...EVEN IF THE WHOLE WORLD REFUSES TO BELIEVE...
...THEN I WILL BELIEVE IN YOU, RENA.

.....!
BUT LOOK. I WANT YOU TO LISTEN TO ME, YOUR FRIEND AND YOUR ALLY.
RENA. I AM YOUR FRIEND...
...AND YOUR NUMBER-ONE ALLY.

...IS A COMPLETE SHAM THAT SHE TOTALLY MADE UP.
THAT SCRAPBOOK TAKANO-SAN GAVE YOU...

...SO SHE WAS MESSING WITH YOU. THAT'S ALL...!
YOU LISTENED TO HER SERIOUSLY ...
THE SCRAPBOOK SHE GAVE YOU WAS NOTHING MORE THAN HER LATEST MASTERPIECE.
TAKANO-SAN IS JUST AN OCCULT FANATIC WHO WRITES UP HER NEW THEORIES AND GOES AROUND TRYING TO GET PEOPLE TO READ THEM.

YOU'RE SAYING IT WAS ALL MADE-UP? IT WAS ALL A LIE?
WHAT CAUSED TOMITAKE-SAN'S DEATH? AND WHAT ABOUT THE SONOZAKI FAMILY? AND RIKA-CHAN?
WHY WAS SHE ALIVE ON THE NIGHT OF THE FESTIVAL?
...IF IT'S JUST A STORY, THEN WHY WAS TAKANO-SAN KILLED?
(GU) (CLENCH)
RIGHT NOW, TRUST ME!
STOP FORCING ALL THE PIECES TO FIT TOGETHER!
I WILL NEVER!
BETRAY MY FRIEND !!
カタ
カタ
カタ
(CTREMBLE)

.....
WHAT IF IT ALL REALLY IS JUST A MISUNDER-STAND-ING...?
BUT WHAT IF THE PARA-SITES AND THE ALIENS—
...YET HE WANTS ME TO BELIEVE HIM?
HE... HAS NO GROUNDS FOR IT...
...IF WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE...
IT WOULD BE SO NICE...

THEN I CAN GO BACK TO KEIICHI-CHAN AND MII-CHAN.
I CAN GO BACK TO MY FRIENDS...

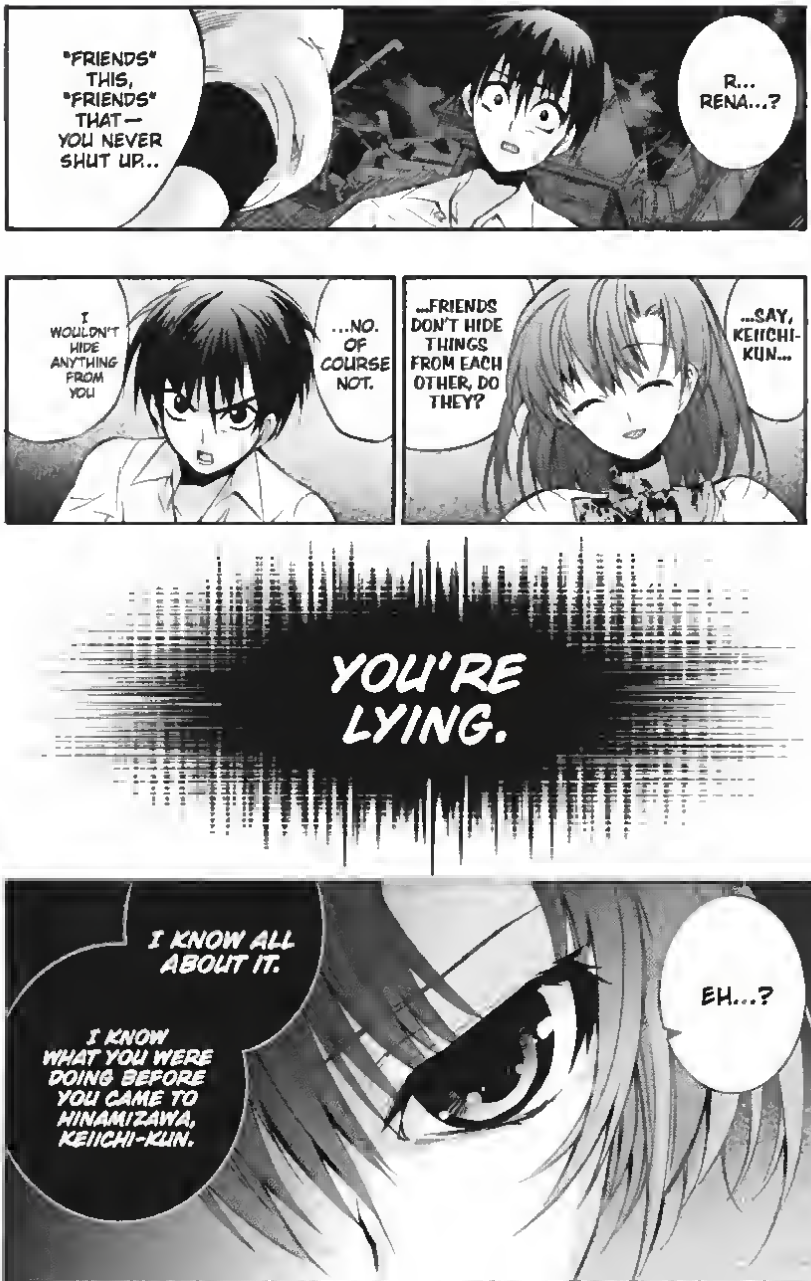
HAVE YOU FORGOT-TEN, RYUGU-SAN?

...THIS MAN'S PAST.
THAT'S RIGHT... OOISHI-SAN TOLD ME...

ABOUT KEIICHI MAEBARA...

DON'T TRUST KEIICHI MAEBARA ...!!
DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU, RENA RYUGU.
THAT'S RIGHT. DON'T BE DECEIVED.
WHAT KIND OF PERSON THIS MAN IS.
ARE YOU OKAY, RENA ...!!?
ARE...

DON'T TOUCH ME.
YOU FILTH.


"FRIENDS" THIS, "FRIENDS" THAT— YOU NEVER SHUT UP..
R... RENA...?
I WOULDN'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM YOU
...NO. OF COURSE NOT.
...FRIENDS DON'T HIDE THINGS FROM EACH OTHER, DO THEY?
...SAY, KEIICHI-KUN...
YOU'RE LYING.
I KNOW ALL ABOUT IT.
I KNOW WHAT YOU WERE DOING BEFORE YOU CAME TO HINAMIZAWA, KEIICHI-KUN.
EH...?

YOU ONLY WENT AFTER ...
...LITTLE GIRLS, DIDN'T YOU?
EWA SHUDDER
...DON'T YOU AGREE?
IT MIGHT BE EVEN MORE SHOCKING THAN THE SERIES OF MYSTERIOUS DEATHS.
I'D BETTER TELL RIKA-CHAN AND SATOKO-CHAN TO BE CAREFUL AROUND YOU.
WHAT ARE YOU...?
WHA ...

MR. CRIMINAL...
...BEHIND THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SMALL CHILDREN?
.....!!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE THERE WAS SUCH A DANGEROUS PERSON SO CLOSE TO ME.
CAN YOU?
MR. CRIMI-NAL...
...BEHIND THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SMALL CHILDREN?

CHAPTER 11: MEMORIES

YOU WERE A TERRIBLE PERSON BEFORE YOU CAME TO HINAMIZAWA, KEIICHI-KUN.
OOISHI-SAN INVESTIGATED EVERYONE.
...GET BEHIND HER...
YOU WOULD MAKE SURE NO ONE ELSE WAS AROUND...
...AND GO AFTER SMALL CHILDREN.
YOU WOULD STEAL OUT IN THE DARK OF NIGHT...
...AND SHOOT HER WITH A MODEL GUN!!

NNNGH ...
WHAT COULD BE SO FUN ABOUT THAT?
BUT IT WAS FUN. THAT'S WHY YOU KEPT DOING IT FOR SOOOO LONG.
AND YET, SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY, YOU COULDN'T IGNORE YOUR CONSCIENCE ANY LONGER.
YOU WENT WITH YOUR PARENTS TO TURN YOURSELF IN.
SO YOU CAN'T TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANYTHING UNLESS YOUR PARENTS ARE WITH YOU?
YOUR FATHER IS RICH, SO HE PAID A LOT OF MONEY TO SETTLE OUT OF COURT.
BILL: JAPANESE BANKNOTE TEN THOUSAND YEN
AND YOU LET MONEY TAKE CARE OF EVERY-THING, MOVED FAR AWAY, AND HAD A CLEAN SLATE.
IT MUST BE NICE TO BE RICH!
AH HA HA HA HA !!

WHY DOES THAT...
...HAVE TO COME UP NOW...?
AUGH ...!
WHY ...?
ZAWA
ZAWA (MURMUR)
ザワ
ザワザワ...
SIGN: INTRAMURAL TEST RANKINGS
学内模試結果発表
...I HAD NO TALENT FOR ANYTHING BUT STUDYING
BEFORE I MOVED TO HINA MIZAWA...

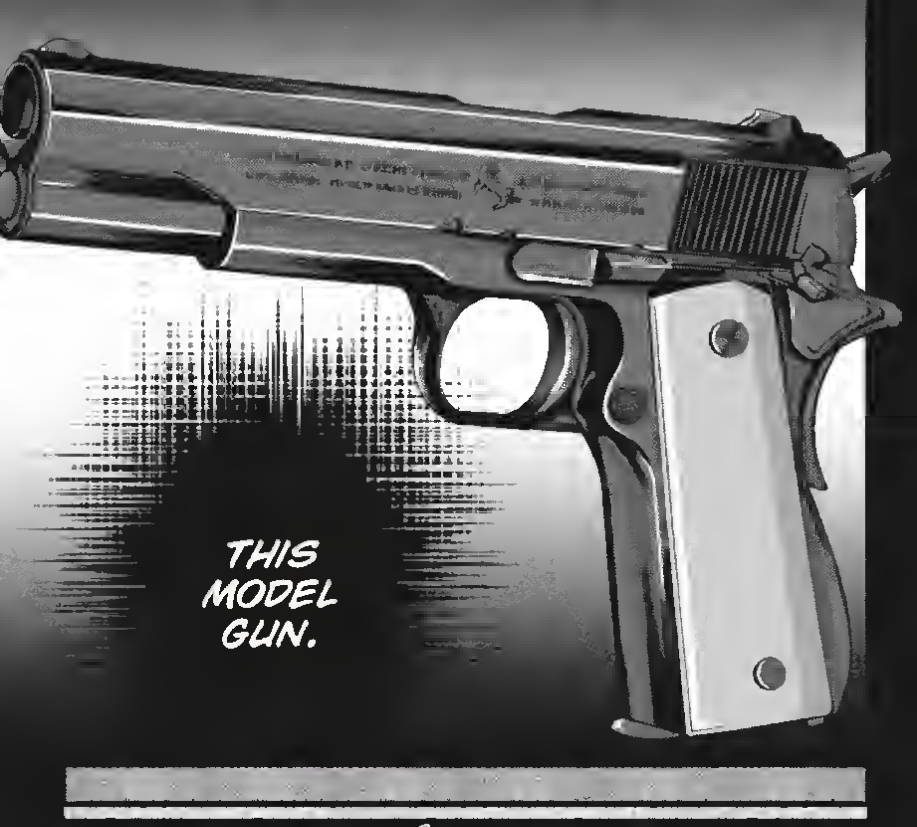
I KEPT STUDYING OUT OF A STUPID DESIRE TO LOOK DOWN ON MY WHOLE CLASS.
AS MY GRADES WENT UP, I BECAME SATURATED WITH MY OWN SENSE OF SUPERIORITY.

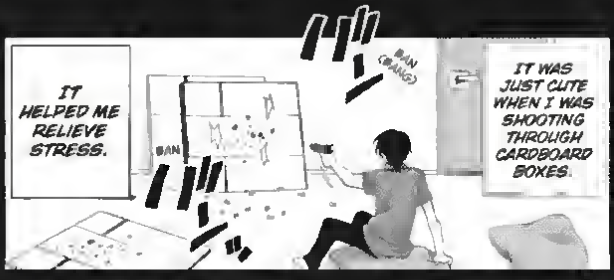
I LIKED HOW IT FELT.
IT MADE MY PARENTS HAPPY, AND MY TEACHER PAMPERED ME.

SO EVENTUALLY ...
...I STARTED THINKING THAT I WAS THE GREATEST PERSON IN THE SCHOOL.
THEY WERE TOP IN THE ENTIRE SCHOOL.
BEFORE I KNEW IT, MY GRADES WEREN'T ONLY TOP IN MY CLASS—

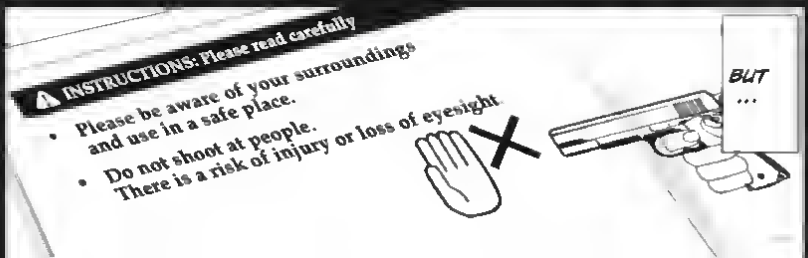
I NEVER EVEN LIKED STUDYING TO BEGIN WITH.
IT WAS JUST THAT I WAS AVERAGE IN SPORTS AND AVERAGE IN A FIGHT. SO STUDYING WAS THE ONLY WEAPON I HAD TO HELP ME STAND ABOVE THE REST
THE BURDENS OF STUDYING JUST KEPT INCREASING.
AND THE PLEASURE I TOOK IN LOOKING DOWN ON OTHERS FADED FAST.
HOWEVER...
MY PARENTS AND TEACHERS STARTED DEMANDING MORE AND MORE OF ME.
MY CLASSMATES GRADUALLY GOT TIRED OF SINGING MY PRAISES.
...THAT DIDN'T LAST LONG EITHER.

IF I WASN'T GETTING PRAISE, THERE WASN'T ANY POINT.
I KEPT STUDYING, BUT I DIDN'T GET ANY PRAISE FOR IT.
...IN A LIFE STEEPED IN STUDY.
I COULDN'T SEE THE VALUE ANYMORE ...
JARA (CRUNCH)
...BY THIS "WEAPON."
I WAS IRRE-SISTIBLY CHARMED ...
...I FOUND IT.
THEN ONE DAY...


THIS MODEL GUN.


IT HELPED ME RELIEVE STRESS.
BAN
BAN (BANG)
IT WAS JUST CUTE WHEN I WAS SHOOTING THROUGH CARDBOARD BOXES.

BOSU (BOFF)
ボス
ボス
BOSU


INSTRUCTIONS: Please read carefully
Please be aware of your surroundings and use in a safe place.
Do not shoot at people. There is a risk of injury or loss of eyesight.
BUT ...

AND MAYBE THAT REBELLION WARPED MY MIND.
I WANTED TO REBEL AGAINST MY PARENTS, WHO FORCED ME TO STUDY.
MY HEART LEAPED AT THOSE WORDS.
...THIS PART IN THE INSTRUCTION MANUAL...
THE "DO NOTS"...
BUT I WAS A COWARD. I DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE.
I COULD HAVE JUST TOLD MY PARENTS THAT I DIDN'T LIKE STUDYING.
GUSHA (CRUMPLE)

THAT'S WHY I...

...STARTED USING MY MODEL GUN...
...TO SHOOT PEOPLE.
I DIDN'T HAVE THE LEAST INTENTION OF HURTING ANYONE...
...BUT I RELISHED SEEING MY VICTIMS RUN AWAY IN FEAR.
KYAAA!
THAT HURTS!!
BAN
BAN (BANG)

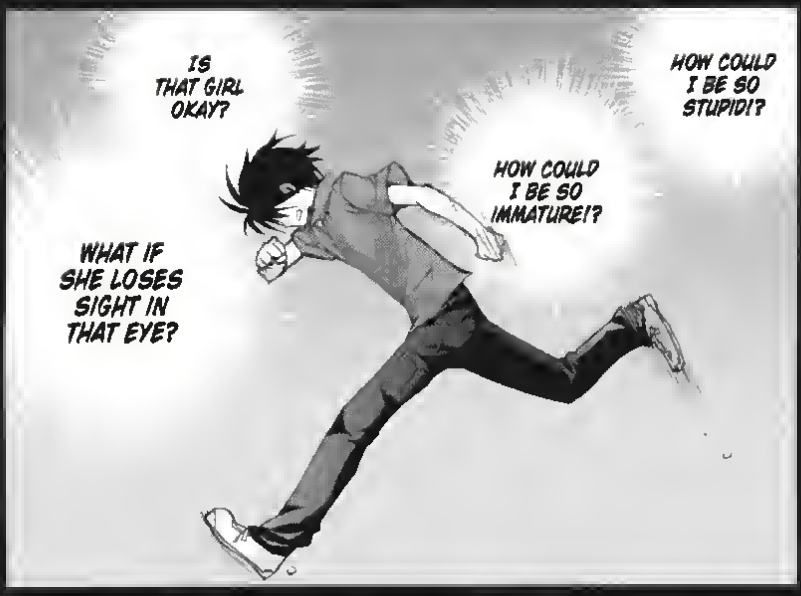
I WAS STUDYING. I WAS DOING A VERY GOOD THING...
...SO IT DIDN'T MATTER IF I WAS ALSO SHOOTING PEOPLE.
THAT WAY I DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THEM COMING FOR PAYBACK.
MY TARGETS WERE GIRLS YOUNGER THAN ME.
FLAG: SAFETY
PEOPLE STARTED FEARING THE SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SMALL CHILDREN.
EVEN-TUALLY, WORD GOT OUT.
WHEN I FOUND A TARGET I'D SHOWER HER WITH BULLETS.
I WOULD SLIP OUT IN THE DARK OF NIGHT AND CHOOSE A PLACE WITH NO ONE AROUND.
BANG BANG
AN
バーン
バーン

IT FELT GOOD. IT WAS FUN.
THE STRESS OF STUDYING FADED AWAY.
MY SATISFACTION GREW.
IT WAS THE SAME PLEASURE I'D FELT WHEN MY GRADES WENT UP AND EVERYONE FAWNED OVER ME.
I'LL DELIVER HER PUNISHMENT.
NOW, WHERE IS THERE A CARELESS BRAT WANDERING AROUND BY HERSELF?
BAM
FEAR ME!
RUN FROM ME!!

AAHHH!
EH...?
AAHHH!
BOTA (DRIP)
ボタ
UWAAHH!
BOTA
ボタッ

MOMMY !!
IT HURTS!
IT HURTS!
EEP ...!!
ダッ
DA (DASH)
I HEARD VOICES OVER THIS WAY!!
ドクン ドクン
WHAT'S WRONG !?
はっ
HA (GASP)
THE BULLET HIT HER RIGHT IN THE EYE...
BLOOD ...
I HAVE TO TAKE HER TO THE HOSPITAL ...
TH.. THE HOSPI-TAL ...
あああ
AAAHHH!

...DID I COME TO REALIZE WHAT A TERRIBLE THING I WAS DOING.
ONLY AFTER SERIOUSLY INJURING SOMEONE...


IS THAT GIRL OKAY?
HOW COULD I BE SO STUPID!?
HOW COULD I BE SO IMMATURE!?
WHAT IF SHE LOSES SIGHT IN THAT EYE?

AND MY OLD MAN HIT ME SO HARD IT MADE MY CHEEK SWELL
MY MOM CRIED

...I COULDN'T BEAR THE WEIGHT OF MY CRIMES, AND I CONFESSED EVERYTHING TO MY PARENTS.
LATE THAT NIGHT ...

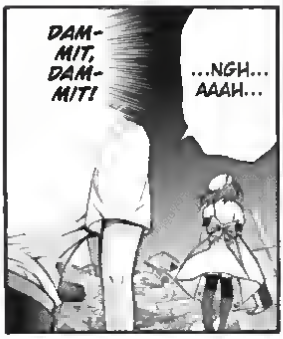
I ATONED FOR MY CRIME.
MY PARENTS CAME WITH ME AS I PRESENTED MYSELF TO THE POLICE.
...DAD SUGGESTED WE MOVE...
A WHILE AFTER THAT...
...AND NEW FRIENDS.
FRESH AIR, CLEAR BLUE SKIES...
...AND I STARTED MY NEW LIFE HERE IN HINAMIZAWA.
I VOWED I WOULD NEVER MAKE THOSE MISTAKES AGAIN...

EVERY DAY WAS A HAPPY ONE.
I WAS REALLY, TRULY GLAD TO HAVE FRIENDS.
THIS TIME, I'LL MAKE IT WORK. THAT'S WHAT I DECIDED.
I WON'T EVER MAKE A MISTAKE IN THIS VILLAGE.
BUT YOU WERE HIDING IT.

YOU WERE LYING.
BUT YOU NEVER SAID A WORD TO US ABOUT IT.
YOU WERE CARRYING THE BURDEN OF YOUR DETESTABLE PAST.
FRIENDS DON'T HIDE THINGS FROM EACH OTHER, DO THEY?
THAT MEANS, KEIICHI-KUN...

...
YOU
...
...ARE
NOT MY
FRIEND
!!

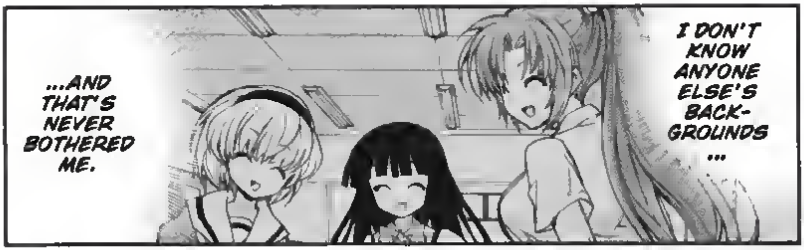
...RENA...
GAKU (SHAKE)
GAKU
ガク
ガク
...R...
...WITH COLD EYES LIKE I'VE NEVER SEEN BEFORE...
...IS LOOKING DOWN ON ME...
...THAT KIND, SWEET RENA ...
...I DON'T NEED TO TAKE ORDERS FROM SOMEONE WHO'S NOT MY FRIEND.
WITH EYES... AS IF SHE WERE LOOKING AT SOME FILTHY OBJECT ...


DAM-MIT, DAM-MIT!
...NGH... AAAH...

IT'S TRUE THAT I WAS HIDING MY PAST.

YOU'RE GOING TO LEAVE ME ALONE NOW.
UNDER-STAND?

...FOR ME TO HIDE IT...?
BUT WAS IT WRONG...


I DON'T KNOW ANYONE ELSE'S BACK-GROUNDS ...
...AND THAT'S NEVER BOTHERED ME.

EVEN RENA JUST MOVED HERE TO HINAMI-ZAWA A YEAR AGO.
I DON'T KNOW ANY-THING ABOUT RENA'S PAST.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO RENA BEFORE...
...IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US NOW.

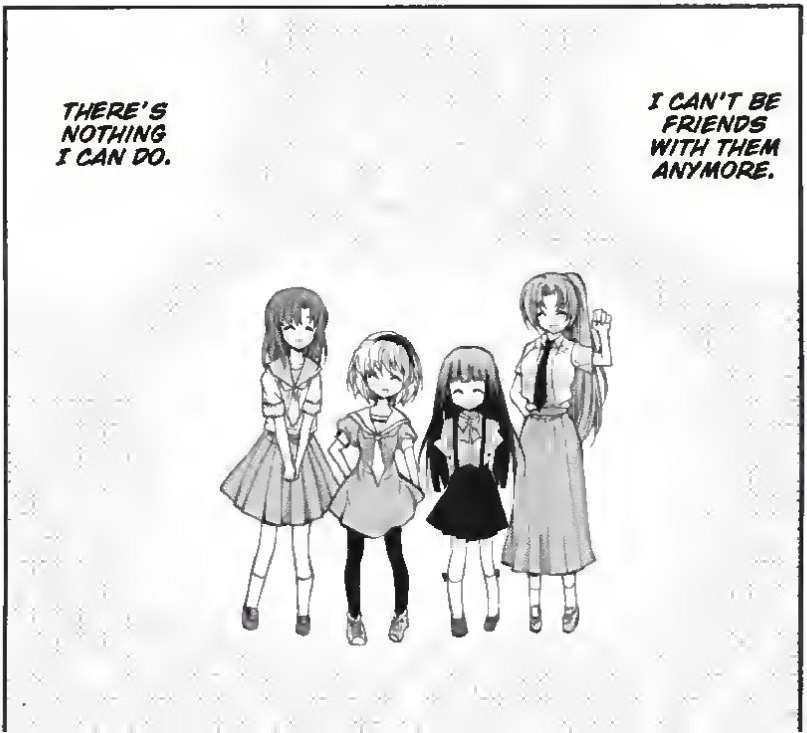
EVEN IF...
GU (CLENCH)
グッ

I WOULDN'T, WOULD I?
...I WOULDN'T LOOK AT RENA LIKE SHE WAS FILTHY, WOULD I?
...OR WENT AROUND BREAKING ALL THE GLASS IN HER SCHOOL...
EVEN IF... RENA BEAT UP SOME OF HER CLASS-MATES...
I WOULDN'T, RIGHT...?

...I'M LYING ...
I'M LYING ...
...I WOULD BE AFRAID OF HER. I'D KEEP MY DISTANCE...
IF I KNEW THAT MY KIND, SWEET RENA HAD A PAST LIKE THAT...
BUT I WOULD REJECT RENA...
SHE'S MY DEAREST FRIEND AND COMPANION...
...MY CLOSEST ALLY.

...I CAN'T ARGUE WITH HER.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH RENA MAY DESPISE ME...
...IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT RENA WOULD REJECT ME.
SO ...

NO MATTER WHERE I GO, I'LL ALWAYS SE A DIRTY, ROTTEN PHANTOM SHOOTER.
I CAN'T CHANGE MY PAST NOW.


THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
I CAN'T BE FRIENDS WITH THEM ANYMORE.

THE CRIMES I'VE COMMITTED...
...CAN NEVER BE UNDONE FOR AS LONG AS I LIVE...

THERE ARE RIDICULOUS RUMORS GOING AROUND THAT SHE WAS ABDUCTED BY DEMONS.
I WONDER WHERE RENA WENT.

THE NEXT DAY.
MHIN (-UZZZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN

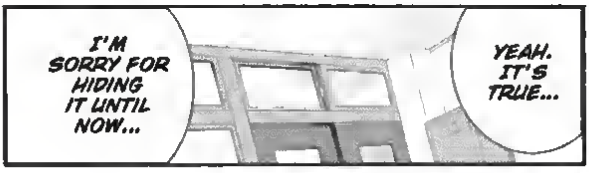
...I COULDN'T SLEEP ALL NIGHT.
STRUCK BY WHAT RENA SAID TO ME YESTERDAY...
BIG CLENCH
HEY, KEI-CHAN, ARE YOU LISTENING?
.....

...YOU'RE NOT MY FRIEND.
IF YOU HIDE THINGS FROM ME...

...BUT WE MIGHT NEVER BE ABLE TO LAUGH TOGETHER AGAIN...
THEY'RE SO FRIENDLY AND CHATTY WITH ME NOW...
IF I TELL THEM ABOUT IT, I JUST KNOW THEY'LL HATE ME.
...MY FILTHY PAST...

...THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO TELL YOU.
SO ...
...I CAN'T KEEP DECEIVING THEM.
BUT I...
I WANT YOU ALL...
...TO KNOW MY PAST.
... CONFESSED EVERYTHING.
MIIN (BUZZZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN
MIN
... THEN I...

シン…
SHIN
(SILENCE)


I'M SORRY FOR HIDING IT UNTIL NOW...
YEAH. IT'S TRUE...

...IS THAT...
... TRUE ...?

BE-CAUSE I...
...BUT I COULDN'T KEEP QUIET ABOUT IT ANY LONGER.

...I DON'T WANT TO HIDE THINGS FROM MY FRIENDS ANYMORE.
I TOLD THEM EVERY-THING...
...BUT I'M GLAD I DID THIS...
NOW I CAN'T GO BACK TO MY FRIENDS ANYMORE.
THEY'RE ALL LOOK-ING AT ME WITH COLD EYES.
...I HAVE ONE LITTLE QUESTION FOR YOU.
SO, KEI-CHAN...

EH?
IS HIDING THINGS FROM YOUR FRIENDS...
...REALLY SO WRONG?
THE LONGER YOU LIVE, THE MORE THINGS HAPPEN THAT YOU DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT.
IF SOMEONE CAN'T CALL ME A FRIEND UNLESS THEY KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT MY PAST...
...THEN I DON'T NEED FRIENDS LIKE THAT.

BUT ...
YOU HAVE TO CONFESS YOUR SINS IN ORDER TO BE FORGIVEN.
KEI-ICHI.
EH ...?
BUT THEN...
...ON YOU'VE CONFESSED A SIN AND BEEN FORGIVEN ...
...YOU DON'T NEED TO CONFESS IT ANYMORE, SIR.
...AND GOT YOUR SCOLDING, DIDN'T YOU?
I MEAN, YOU WENT TO THE POLICE...
RIKA IS EXACTLY RIGHT!
RIKA-CHAN ...

IF YOU'VE ALREADY ATONED...
...THEN YOUR CRIME IS OVER, KEIICHI-SAN.
WHA ...?
I TOLD THEM EVERYTHING, SO...
...WHY AREN'T THEY CONDEMNING ME...?
IF YOU TURNED YOURSELF IN AND ACCEPTED THE CONSEQUENCES...
...THEN YOU'VE DONE YOUR JOB, KEI-CHAN.
NOW ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS ENGRAVE IT ON YOUR HEART AND TUCK IT AWAY IN YOUR MIND.
THAT'S RIGHT.

...THERE ARE MOUNTAINS OF THINGS THAT I WOULD LIKE TO KEEP SECRET!
I MEAN, SPEAKING OF EMBARRASSING STORIES FROM THE PAST...
ヲニ
OHHHH!
HO! HO!
ホッホッ

WHA ...!!?
にぱー
NIPAAA CHEEEAMO
SATOKO ESPECIALLY HAS LOTS AND LOTS, SIR!

...WHAT SATOKO SAID WAS REALLY GOOD.
DID YOU CATCH IT, KEI-CHAN?

I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE!
YOU DO TOO, RIKA! YOU DO TOO!

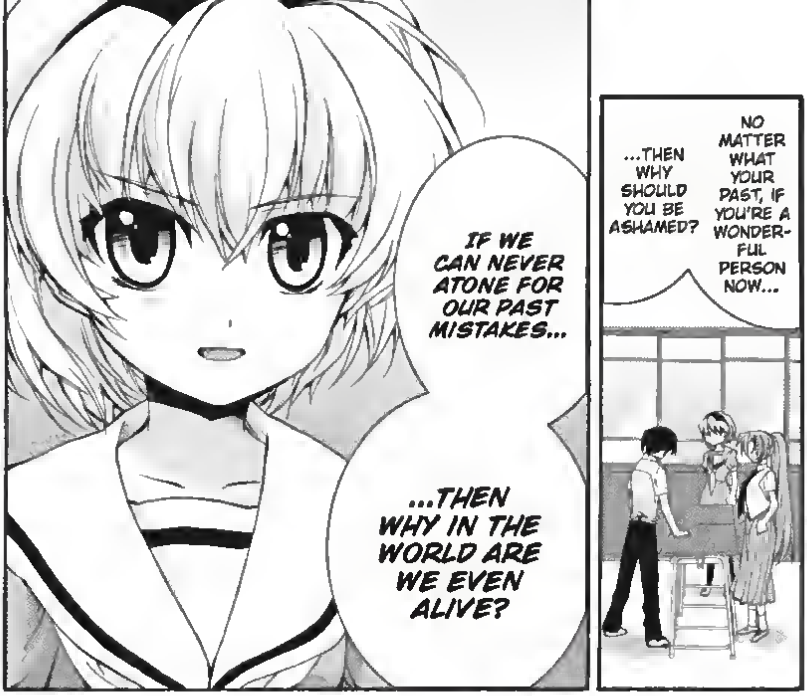
NO, NO!
THE PART ABOUT WANTING TO KEEP THE PAST A SECRET?
.....

THE PART WHERE EVERYONE HAS SECRETS!
PACHIN (WINK)

I THINK THAT UNLESS YOU GREW UP IN A COMPLETELY STERILIZED ROOM OR SOMETHING ...
...THEN LIFE IS A CYCLE OF TRIAL AND ERROR.

EVERYONE'S MADE A LOT OF MISTAKES AND FAILURES THAT THEY DON'T WANT TO TELL ANYONE.

...NO, NO, IT GOES FOR EVERYONE IN OUR CLASS.
IT GOES FOR ME, SATOKO, RIKA-CHAN...
THAT DOESN'T ONLY GO FOR YOU, KEI-CHAN.
...YOU BECOME A WONDERFUL PERSON, THEN IT'S ALL OKAY.
...AFTER ALL THAT...
AND IF...
WE ALL EXPERI-ENCE LOTS OF GOOD THINGS AND LOTS OF BAD THINGS.
PON (PAT)
ぽん
MION ...


IF WE CAN NEVER ATONE FOR OUR PAST MISTAKES...
...THEN WHY IN THE WORLD ARE WE EVEN ALIVE?
NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PAST, IF YOU'RE A WONDERFUL PERSON NOW...
...THEN WHY SHOULD YOU BE ASHAMED?

SHE REGRETS THAT, AND NOW SHE'S DOING HER BEST, SIR.
...SATOKO WAS VERY SPOILED IN THE PAST.

RIKA ...
SO IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT SHE WAS LIKE IN THE PAST, SIR.
ぎゅう (HUG)
ぎゅうっ
THE SATOKO WE HAVE NOW IS VERY WONDERFUL.

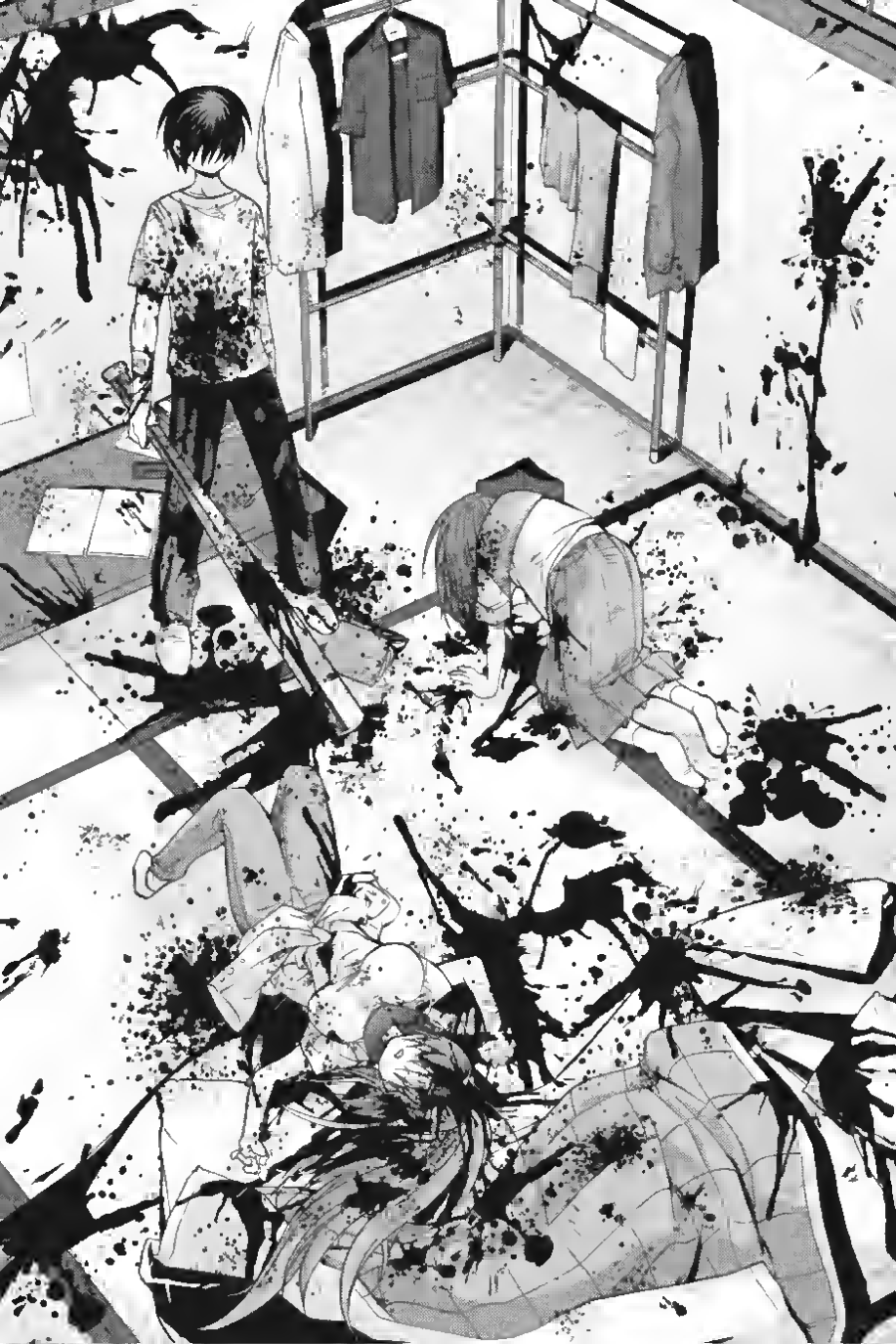
DURING THE DAM WAR, THIS OLD MAN WOULD THROW BRICKS.
I WAS A REGULAR AT THE POLICE HOLDING CELLS.
BESIDES, SHOOTING PEOPLE WITH A MODEL GUN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT? THAT'S CUTE.
MII USED TO BE A NOTORIOUS BAD KITTY, SIR.
MEOW, MEOW!
AND THAT GOES FOR YOU TOO, KEIICHI, SIR.
.....!
IT DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH MII NOW.
...BUT THAT WAS IN THE PAST.
...BUT I DID SOMETHING REALLY TERRIBLE.
I HURT SOMEONE...

YOU PLAY WITH US, AND YOU EVEN HELP US WITH OUR SCHOOLWORK.
BUT YOU'RE A GOOD GUY NOW, RIGHT?
...I HID IT FROM YOU ALL THIS TIME.
BUT EVEN THOUGH I DID SOMETHING SO AWFUL...
...BECAUSE YOU WERE WITH US.
BUT WE WERE ALL SAVED AT THE TRASH HEAP THE OTHER DAY...
... DOESN'T MATTER TO US, SIR.
...WHAT HAPPENED WHERE YOU USED TO LIVE...

...IS OUR PRECIOUS, IRREPLACEABLE FRIEND, SIR.
BECAUSE THE KEIICHI WE SEE NOW...
...EVEN AFTER EVERY-THING I'VE DONE...
EVEN...
...THEY STILL CALL ME THEIR FRIEND ...
... AFTER EVERY-THING ...

...WE'RE STILL FRIENDS...
YOU'RE A GROWN MAN. WHAT'RE YOU CRYING FOR?
TSUN (POKE)
ツン
OH, COME ON, KEI-CHAN.

NOW...
...HURRY UP AND FEEL BETTER!
☆



WH...
WHAT WAS THAT...?
DID I...
...KILL MION SOME-WHERE ...?
WHAT WAS THAT MEMORY?
A DREAM?
...NO, IT WAS TOO REAL FOR THAT.
I REMEM-BER WHAT IT FELT LIKE TO HIT HER.
I DID IT.
WITH MY OWN HANDS ...

BACK THEN, I...
...THAT'S RIGHT. IT WASN'T JUST THAT.
WHY WOULD I DO THAT...?
WHY?
BUT THE TRUTH IS, THERE WAS A BRUTAL MURDER. WASN'T THERE!?
YOU TOLD ME THERE WEREN'T ANY INCIDENTS AT THE DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE.
FRIENDS DON'T HIDE THINGS FROM EACH OTHER.
IS THAT WHY YOU LEFT ME OUT?
...'COS I DIDN'T WANT TO SCARE YOU, KEI-CHAN...
TH-THAT WAS...
YOU LIAR.
YOU'RE NO FRIEND OF MINE.

...SO SHE HID THE VILLAGE'S PAST FROM ME SO I WOULDN'T GET SCARED.
I HAD JUST MOVED HERE, AND MION WAS ALWAYS WORRIED ABOUT ME...
BUT I REMEMBER IT CLEARLY.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.
...AND SHE HADN'T DONE ANYTHING WRONG!!
BUT I KEPT PRESSING HER...
THE GIRL WHO WILL ALWAYS BE MY BEST FRIEND.
MION WAS MION.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANY IDEA HOW MY FRIEND FELT.
I... WAS SCUM!

SO WHY...
...WHY DID I DOUBT HER...!!?
THAT TIME TOO...
PIN-POON (CHIME-SOUND)
OH YEAH.
KEI-CHAAAN! YOU ALIVE?
WHO IS IT ...?
BIKU! (WINCE)

MION AND RENA WENT OUT OF THEIR WAY TO SEE ME WHEN I STAYED HOME FROM SCHOOL.
AND THEY BROUGHT ME SOME HOME-MADE OHAGI.
SO WHY...
...WAS I SO AFRAID OF MION?
JUST BECAUSE SHE KNEW I HAD EATEN WITH OOISHI-SAN!?
THEY JUST WANTED TO HELP ME FEEL BETTER, THAT'S ALL.
BYE, KEI-CHAN.
KEIICHI-KUN, YOU DON'T LOOK VERY WELL.
YOU'RE RIGHT. LET'S GO HOME.
THAT'S WHY HER NEXT LINE...
...WENT LIKE THIS...
GACHA (KACHAK)
ガチャ

WE DON'T WANT YOU...
...TO STAY HOME FROM SCHOOL TOMORROW.
...AND ANSWERED SOMETHING LIKE...
...I SHOULD HAVE APPRECI-ATED THEIR EFFORTS...
BUT I...
BUT ...
YORO (STAGGER)
"SEE YOU AT SCHOOL!"
... "TOMOR-ROW I'LL BE FINE! I'LL BE THERE!

...LOCKED THE DOOR...
GACHA (CLICK)
ガチャ...
...LIKE I WAS REJECTING THEM.
BUT I WAS COMPLETELY AFRAID OF THEM.
THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO HELP ME FEEL BETTER.
...THEY PUT THEIR HEARTS INTO MAKING THEM...
AND THE OHAGI THEY BROUGHT AS A GET-WELL GIFT...
PAPER: MINAMIZAWA
...KICK IN THE OHAGI.
I FELT SOME KIND OF...
モグ
MOGU (MUNCH)

...AND I ASSOCIATED THAT KICK WITH SOMETHING OMINOUS...
BUT I WAS SO SUSPICIOUS, I WAS SEEING THINGS THAT WEREN'T THERE...
THEY COULD HAVE MIXED IN SOME TABASCO OR SOMETHING.
THEY LOVE PLAYING PRACTICAL JOKES.
...WITH A HORRIFYING SCENE WHERE SEWING NEEDLES WERE MIXED IN SOMEONE'S FOOD.
I REMEMBERED A MANGA OR SOMETHING I HAD SEEN A LONG TIME AGO ...
...FOR SOME REASON ...
...I REALLY ...
AS SOON AS I THOUGHT HOW BAD IT WOULD BE IF THERE WERE SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THE OHAGI...

...THOUGHT THAT...
...THERE WAS A NEEDLE ...!!
EVEN IF THERE HAD BEEN A NEEDLE...
GULP
AM I STUPID...? A FRIEND WOULDN'T PUT A NEEDLE IN FOOD.
...I ASSUMED THAT THERE WAS A SEWING NEEDLE WHEN THERE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN...
...I SHOULD'VE ASSUMED IT WAS SOME KIND OF MISTAKE...
...AND TRUSTED MY FRIENDS' INNO-CENCE!!

KANA (CHIRP)
KANA
KANA...
カナカナカナ・・・
AND ON THAT LAST DAY...

OH GOOD.
YOU'RE ALIVE.

...ANX-IOUS ABOUT MY HEALTH ...
...RENA AND MION CAME TO VISIT...

AND MION JOKED AROUND LIKE ALWAYS TO HELP ME FEEL BETTER.
RENA WAS SINCERELY WORRIED.

AND ...
THEY CONTACTED THE DOCTOR AT IRIE CLINIC SO HE COULD COME CHECK ME OUT.
YES. HE SAID HE'D BE HERE RIGHT AWAY.
DID YOU CALL THE DIRECTOR?
...I GUESS WE'LL GET THIS OUT OF THE WAY BEFORE THE DIRECTOR GETS HERE
BOOBS (RUMMAGE)
ALL RIGHT ...
IT'S YOUR PENALTY GAME.
PENALTY GAME!
WE'LL HAVE YOU MEET THE SAME FATE AS TOMITAKE-SAN!

...AND THOUGHT SHE WAS GOING TO KILL ME.
I SAW THE SYRINGE IN MION'S HAND...
...WITH A DRUG, JUST LIKE TOMITAKE-SAN...
...I WAS CONVINCED THAT I'D BE MUR-DERED...
...A SYRINGE THAT MION WAS HOLD-ING?
...BUT WAS IT REALLY ...
REMEMBER! WHAT WAS MION HOLDING ...?
KYUPON (KA-POP)
IT WAS ...

A MARK-ER...
.....
SHIRT. PLEASE LET US SEE YOUR PHOTOS NEXT TIME, OKAY? —RENA /
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE YOUR MAJOR DEBUT THIS YEAR! —MION /
COME PLAY WITH US AGAIN —KEIICHI
I ASSUMED THAT THE MARKER WAS A SYRINGE.
AND YET I WAS AFRAID OF MION.
SHE WAS GIVING ME THE SAME PENALTY GAME TO CHEER ME UP.
WE WROTE ON TOMITAKE-SAN'S SHIRT.

THEN... RENA HELD ME DOWN ...
...AND MION CAME CLOSER.
WHAT WAS MION ...
...GOING TO WRITE ON MY SHIRT?
***
***** ** *** **** ******
I HEARD ...
...I CAN HEAR IT.
I HEARD IT.
...WHAT MION WAS GOING TO WRITE...!!

HURRY UP AND FEEL BETTER!
☆
I HEARD IT, BUT I... IF I HEARD IT...
...I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT MION WASN'T DOING ANYTHING MALICIOUS ...!!

I WAS SO SUSPICIOUS I WAS SEEING THINGS. I WAS AFRAID OF EVERYTHING ABOUT THE VILLAGE.
I WAS THE ONE WHO WAS ACTING DIFFERENT.
THEY WERE MY GREATEST FRIENDS.
MION AND RENA WEREN'T ANY DIFFERENT FROM USUAL.
AND I...
ガッ
AND ...
...WITH MY OWN HANDS.
I KILLED MY FRIENDS...

GATAN (CLATTER)
カタン!!
WHAT'S WRONG ...!?
JUST A... KEI-CHAN?
I... I...
...I DID IT!
I KNOW I DID, IN A DIFFERENT WORLD SOME-WHERE.
GU (CLENCH)
グ!!
YOU STUPID JERK !!!

MION ...
...MY GREAT-EST FRIEND!
I BEAT HER TO DEATH ...!!
BORO (FOUR),
BORO
K...KEI-CHAN...?

LIKE I'D LET YOU BEAT ME TO DEATH, KEI-CHAN!!
NO! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT ...!
あぁあ
AAAAH!
K... KEI-CHAN, CALM DOWN.
I'M ALIVE, SEE?
オロ
ORO
オロ
ORO (FLUSTER)
...BUT I HAD NO WAY TO EXPLAIN IT.
THEY ALL HAD CONFUSED LOOKS ON THEIR FACES....
YOU RE-MEMBER, KEIICHI, SIR...?
...KEI-ICHI.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THESE MEMORIES WERE EITHER...
AAAH!
あぁあ

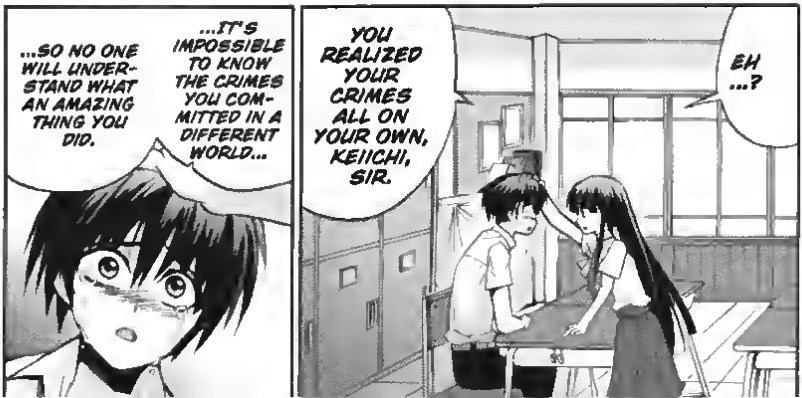
...RIKA-CHAN...
YOU REMEM-BER...
...THAT YOU KILLED RENA AND MII?
I KILLED THEM!!
NNNGH!
YES. I REMEM-BER IT CLEARLY.
...I WENT TO THE PHONE BOOTH.
AND IN THE END, WITH NO REGRETS...
I THOUGHT I WAS THE ONLY VICTIM.
I DOUBTED MY FRIENDS.

MY THROAT ITCHED SO BAD I COULDN'T STAND IT... I SCRATCHED IT OUT...
...AND SELFISHLY DIED, ALL ON MY OWN...
KEI-ICHI ...
...HAVE YOU REALIZED YOUR CRIMES?
THE MION IN THIS WORLD IS DEFINITELY ALIVE.
IS SOME-THING WRONG?
NO, NO
...YEAH... AFTER ALL THIS TIME ...
...I FINALLY REMEMBER.
BUT THE MION I KILLED IN THE OTHER WORLD...
...I CAN'T APOLOGIZE! I CAN'T ATONE!

WHEN I TRANS-FERRED HERE, MION...
...WAS THE VERY FIRST PERSON TO TALK TO ME.
SHE WAS ONE YEAR OLDER THAN ME...
...BUT SHE ACTED IN A WAY THAT DIDN'T MAKE ME FEEL THE DIF-FERENCE AT ALL.
I LOVED HER AS MY BEST FRIEND...
...AND MY DEAREST COMPANION.
THAT'S WHO MION IS TO ME.
SO WHY COULDN'T I TRUST HER...?

I WON'T EVER GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE IT UP TO THAT MION.
I CAN'T UNDO THE CRIMES I'VE COMMITTED.
FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE...
...MY CRIME WILL NEVER BE FOR-GIVEN.
...KEIICHI.
MIIN (BUZZZZ)
MIIN
MIIN
MIIN

I FORGIVE YOU, KEIICHI.


EH ...?
YOU REALIZED YOUR CRIMES ALL ON YOUR OWN, KEIICHI, SIR.
...IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO KNOW THE CRIMES YOU COMMITTED IN A DIFFERENT WORLD...
...SO NO ONE WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT AN AMAZING THING YOU DID.

BUT I UNDERSTAND, SIR.
SO I CAN FORGIVE YOU, KEIICHI.
...I UNDER-STAND THAT THIS IS A MIRACLE.
SU (SSK)
BECAUSE REALIZING THE CRIMES YOU COMMITTED IN A DIFFERENT WORLD...
...IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE.
RIKA-CHAN...
I HAD NO IDEA WHAT RIKA-CHAN WAS TALKING ABOUT.
BUT I GOT THE FEELING THAT SHE, AT LEAST...
...UNDER-STOOD THESE IMPOS-SIBLE MEMORIES

AS YOU ARE NOW, YOU WILL UNDER-STAND.
...KEI-ICHI.
...THE CURRENT RENA RYUGU IS IN.
YOU UNDER-STAND WHAT STATE OF MIND ...
HA (GAS!?)
は...
I ASSUMED EVERYTHING AROUND ME WAS MY ENEMY, AND I WENT CRAZY.
...BACK THEN, THE SLIGHTEST THING MADE ME SUSPECT ANYONE.

IT'S THE SAME WITH RENA RIGHT NOW.
SHE WANTS TO TRUST HER FRIENDS SO MUCH SHE CAN'T STAND IT ...
...BUT SHE JUST CAN'T BRING HERSELF TO DO IT.
...BUT SHE BELIEVES IT'S THE WORLD THAT'S GONE MAD.
SHE'S THE ONLY ONE GOING CRAZY...
WHAT DO WE DO...?
I COULDN'T FIGURE IT OUT...
POTA (DRIP)
POTA

I'VE BEEN THROUGH IT MYSELF, SO I KNOW.
NO ONE'S VOICE WILL REACH RENA...
MMMN (BUZZZZ)
MIN
MIN
MIN

KEIICHI-KUN.

TRUST ME.
I'VE HEARD THESE WORDS SOMEWHERE BEFORE.
THAT'S RENA'S VOICE.
ガヴ...
DATA CLAMPERS

REMEM-
BER!
REMEM-
BER!
BACK
WHEN I
LOST MY
SENSES!
REMEM-
BER WHAT
HAPPENED
THEN!
MY
ROOM
IN THAT
WORLD.
MY
HOUSE.

...AND RENA ...
I HAD ALREADY KILLED MION...
RENA...
...WAS THERE, ALL BEAT UP.

SHE WAS BLEED-ING.
I'D BEATEN HER BADLY WITH THE BAT.
I HAD LOST IT.
AND HER FOREHEAD WAS SPLIT OPEN.
HER ARM WAS BRO-KEN.
BUT EVEN SO...
...EVEN SO, RENA...

...SMILED AT ME.
...SO SHE SMILED AT ME SO THAT SHE WOULDN'T SCARE ME.
RENA KNEW I WAS AFRAID...
...AND HER OWN LIFE WAS IN DANGER.
MION WAS ALREADY DEAD...
...AND I SHOWERED HER WITH BLOWS FROM MY BAT.
EVEN THEN, I COULDN'T TRUST RENA...

AND YET RENA...
...AS I WAS SWINGING THE BAT TO DELIVER THE FINAL BLOW...
...IN THE VERY LAST MOMENT...
IT'S OKAY, KEIICHI-KUN.

TRUST ME.

...SHE KEPT SMILING, AND SHE SAID...
UP UNTIL THE LAST SECOND BEFORE SHE LOST HER LIFE...
IN THE LAST MOMENT ...
...RENA DIDN'T COVER HER HEAD.

"TRUST ME."

RRAAGH!!
WHY !!?
MY FRIEND WAS TELLING ME TO TRUST HER, SO WHY...!!?
RENA WAS MY FRIEND UP UNTIL HER DEATH!!
SO WHY COULDN'T I BELIEVE IN HER !!!?
...
KEIICHI
...

...IN THE SAME WAY.
...I HAVE TO DESTROY MY CRIMES ...
BUT ...
... THE WEIGHT FEELS A LITTLE LIGHTER BECAUSE YOU'VE FORGIVEN ME, RIKA-CHAN.
IS MY LIFE WORTH HANGING ONTO?
GIGIGI (CRREEEAK)
RENA DIED FOR HER FRIEND.
I'LL SNAP RENA OUT OF THIS!
I'LL SAVE HER !!
KI (CLAIRE)

ALL THAT LIES AHEAD IS TRAGEDY.
...THIS WORLD HAS ALREADY GONE MAD.
...WILL YOU FIGHT, SIR...?
...EVEN SO...
...KEI-ICHI...
ギュッ

GIVING UP MEANS I DON'T BELIEVE.
...I'M NOT GIVING UP.

SO THERE'S STILL TIME.

I BELIEVE IN OUR BOND AS FRIENDS.
I BELIEVE IN RENA.

I WON'T LET THERE BE A TRAGEDY!
GU (CLENCH)
NO MATTER WHAT !!
JUST YESTERDAY, I STOPPED CARING WHAT HAPPENED TO RENA.
...I'M EXHAUSTED FROM MY COUNTLESS FAILURES.
BUT ...
...THAT WAS WRONG.

KEIICHI MAE-BARA.
I WILL FIGHT ALONGSIDE YOU.

...TO REACH THE FUTURE BEYOND ...!
AS MANY TIMES AS IT TAKES ...

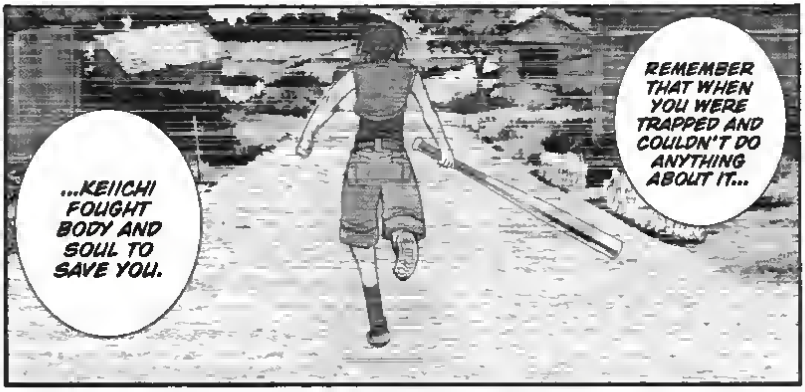
I WILL FIGHT AS MANY TIMES AS IT TAKES.
SO I WILL FIGHT ALONG-SIDE YOU.

... SUB-LIME.
I'VE LEARNED THAT THE WILL TO FIGHT IS BEAUTI-FUL...

...THAT COULD TWIST DES-TINY.
IT CAN SPARK MIRA-CLES ...

KOTSUN
...PLEASE REMEMBER SOMEDAY, OKAY?
BUT SATOKO ...

IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT YOU WOULDN'T REMEMBER, SIR
WH..! WHAT WERE YOU AND KEIICHI-SAN TALKING ABOUT, RIKA?


...KEIICHI FOUGHT BODY AND SOUL TO SAVE YOU.
REMEMBER THAT WHEN YOU WERE TRAPPED AND COULDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...

HEE-HEE... RIGHT, KEIICHI?
I DON'T THINK I CAN BELIEVE THAT...
...KEI-ICHI-SAN DID?

THERE MIGHT BE A WORLD...
...WHERE I RISKED MY OWN LIFE FIGHTING FOR SATOKO TOO...
NII-NII!
...SATOKO IS ONE OF MY DEAR FRIENDS TOO.
...YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT...
HI (GRIN)

I'M SORRY FOR THE COMMO-TION.
NO.
MAEBARA-KUN, IS SOMETHING THE MATTER ...?

WHAT THE HECK IS WRONG ...?
WH-WHAT IS IT, KEI-CHAN?
HWA?
MION.
SU (GSK)
ZA (LOOK)

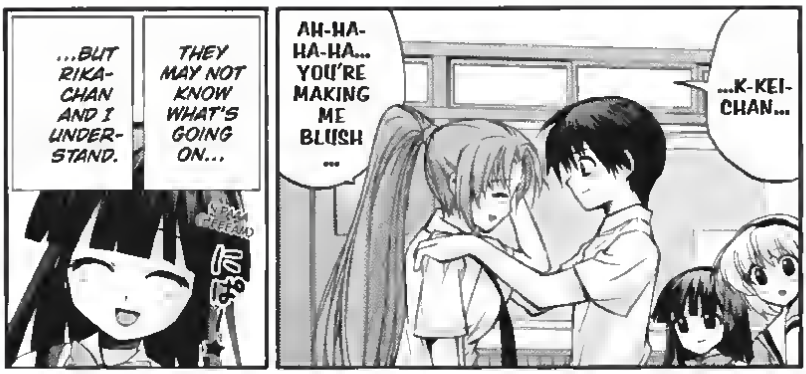
ぎゅっ
GYU (HUG)
AH ...!
I'M SORRY.
I'M REALLY SORRY...!
F-F-F-FOR WHAT!?
THIS OLD MAN HAS NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT ...

BUT LISTEN TO ME.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND, IT'S OKAY.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND.
THE OHAGI WERE REALLY DELICIOUS.
I'LL SEE YOU AT SCHOOL TOMORROW ...!

BUT I'LL NEVER MIS-TRUST YOU—
NO, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO IT IS.
I'M REALLY SORRY IT TOOK ME THIS LONG TO THANK YOU.
@YU (HUG)

...TO SAY IT BACK THEN...
I JUST COULDN'T BRING MYSELF...

I'LL NEVER MISTRUST MY FRIENDS AGAIN.
NO MATTER WHAT ...!!
SOMEDAY, IF ANY MISFORTUNE BEFALLS YOU, MION...
...I'LL SAVE YOU, EVEN IF IT COSTS ME MY LIFE.
NO MATTER WHAT. I PROMISE ...!!
.....


...K-KEI-CHAN...
AH-HA-HA-HA... YOU'RE MAKING ME BLUSH ...
THEY MAY NOT KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON...
...BUT RIKA-CHAN AND I UNDER-STAND.

WE WON'T ACCEPT ANY TRAGEDY.
WE'LL FIGHT DESTINY TO THE LAST.

BACK THEN...
...IN THAT HINA-MIZAWA...

...AND RENA FOUGHT...
...MION FOUGHT...
SO I WILL SAVE RENA.
I'LL DO WHAT SHE DID FOR ME.

I...
...WILL STAKE MY LIFE ON IT.

KANA (CHIRP)
KANA
KANA

カナカナカナ…
KANA KANA KANA…
I WILL SAVE THEM.
KANA KANA KANA
カナカナカナ
I HAVE TO SAVE HINA-MIZAWA.
I HAVE TO SAVE THEM.
POTA (DRIP?)
ポタッ
I HAVE TO SAVE THEM.
POTA
ポタッ
I HAVE TO SAVE THEM.
I WILL DO ANYTHING …
KANA
KANA
KANA
…TO SAVE THIS VILLAGE.
GARI (SCRATCH)
ガリッ
KANA
KANA
KANA
KANA

KANA
KANA
KANA

ABOUT THE "ATONEMENT ARC" PRECISELY BECAUSE HE IS A "NORMAL PERSON"

ORIGINAL STORY, SUPERVISOR: RYUKISHI07

HELLO, I'M RYUKISHI07.

FOR THIS AFTERWORD, I WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT THE MAIN CHARACTER OF *HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY*, KEIICHI MAEBARA.

IT'S TRUE THAT KEIICHI MAEBARA HAS SEVERAL UNIQUE TRAITS. BUT FUNDAMENTALLY, HE'S A NORMAL PERSON, JUST LIKE YOU AND ME. HE HAS AN ENERGY BEFITTING HIS AGE, AND HE CAN'T SIT BACK AND WATCH WHEN SOMETHING'S BOTHERING HIS FRIENDS. THOSE ARE ALL TRAITS THAT WOULD BE NATURAL AND NOT A BIT STRANGE FOR ANY OF US TO HAVE.

AND IF THIS KEIICHI CAN CONFRONT THE HARDSHIPS THAT BEFALL HIM AND OVERCOME THEM, THEN THAT MEANS WE CAN ALL OVERCOME, JUST LIKE HIM. IT THRILLS ME TO THINK OF IT.

OF COURSE, *HIGURASHI* IS ENTERTAINMENT. NOTHING COULD BE BETTER THAN FOR YOU TO LAUGH AND CRY AS YOU READ IT.

BUT IF THERE'S ANYONE WHO LEARNS FROM KEIICHI MAEBARA AND PUTS WHAT THEY LEARN INTO PRACTICE, THEN AS THE AUTHOR, I'M CERTAIN THAT NOTHING COULD MAKE ME HAPPIER.

OH, BUT PLEASE IMITATE KEIICHI'S GOOD QUALITIES, OKAY? DON'T COPY THE BAD ONES!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR STICKING WITH ME THIS FAR. THE "ATONEMENT ARC" HAS PASSED ITS TURNING POINT. ALL THAT'S LEFT IS A STRAIGHT DASH TO THE FINISH. IT'LL BE A CLIMAX FROM BEGINNING TO END! I HOPE THAT YOU'LL JOIN ME AGAIN.
THIS VOLUME IS A BIG ONE WITH A LOT OF PAGES. I'VE ALWAYS SECRETLY DREAMED OF PUTTING OUT A REALLY THICK GRAPHIC NOVEL, SO I AM EXTREMELY GLAD AND HUMBLED. VOLUME FOUR, THE NEXT VOLUME, WILL BE THE LAST ONE. I WILL DO MY BEST TO MAKE IT EVEN MORE INTENSE THAN THIS ONE.
KARIN SUZUKAZE
SANTA
SORRY FOR ALL THE SANTAS EVERY-WHERE

-SPECIAL THANKS-

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NAYU Y-SAMA,
NIWAKO-SAMA,
BANCHO-SAMA,
TOMOKA FURUOA-SAMA,
MISSHII-SAMA,
MOYOMOSO-SAMA,
RICO-SAMA,
YF-SAMA,
YOSHUN-SAMA

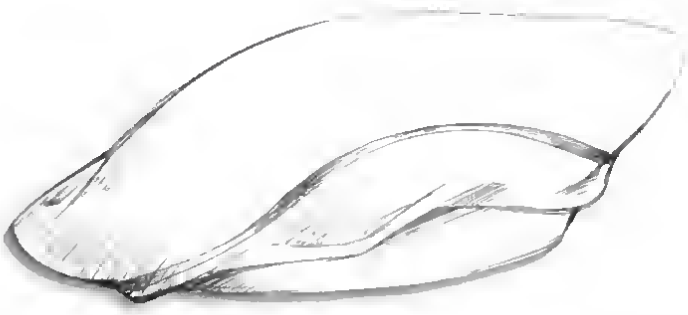
AND YOU!

HEY, KEIICHI-KUN...

...NEXT TIME, LET'S PLAY LIKE NORMAL, LAUGH TOGETHER LIKE NORMAL... AND FALL IN LOVE LIKE NORMAL.

...IF...

...WE MEET AGAIN.



HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY:
ATONEMENT ARC 4 (CONCLUSION)

HIGURASHI
WHEN THEY CRY
ATONEMENT ARC ③

RYUKISHI07
Karin Suzuragi

Translation: Alethea Nibley and Athena Nibley

Lettering: AndWorld Design

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Higurashi WHEN THEY CRY Atonement Arc, Vol. 3
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First Yen Press ebook Edition: April 2014

ebook ISBN: 978-0-316-23775-8

App ISBN: 978-0-316-23871-7